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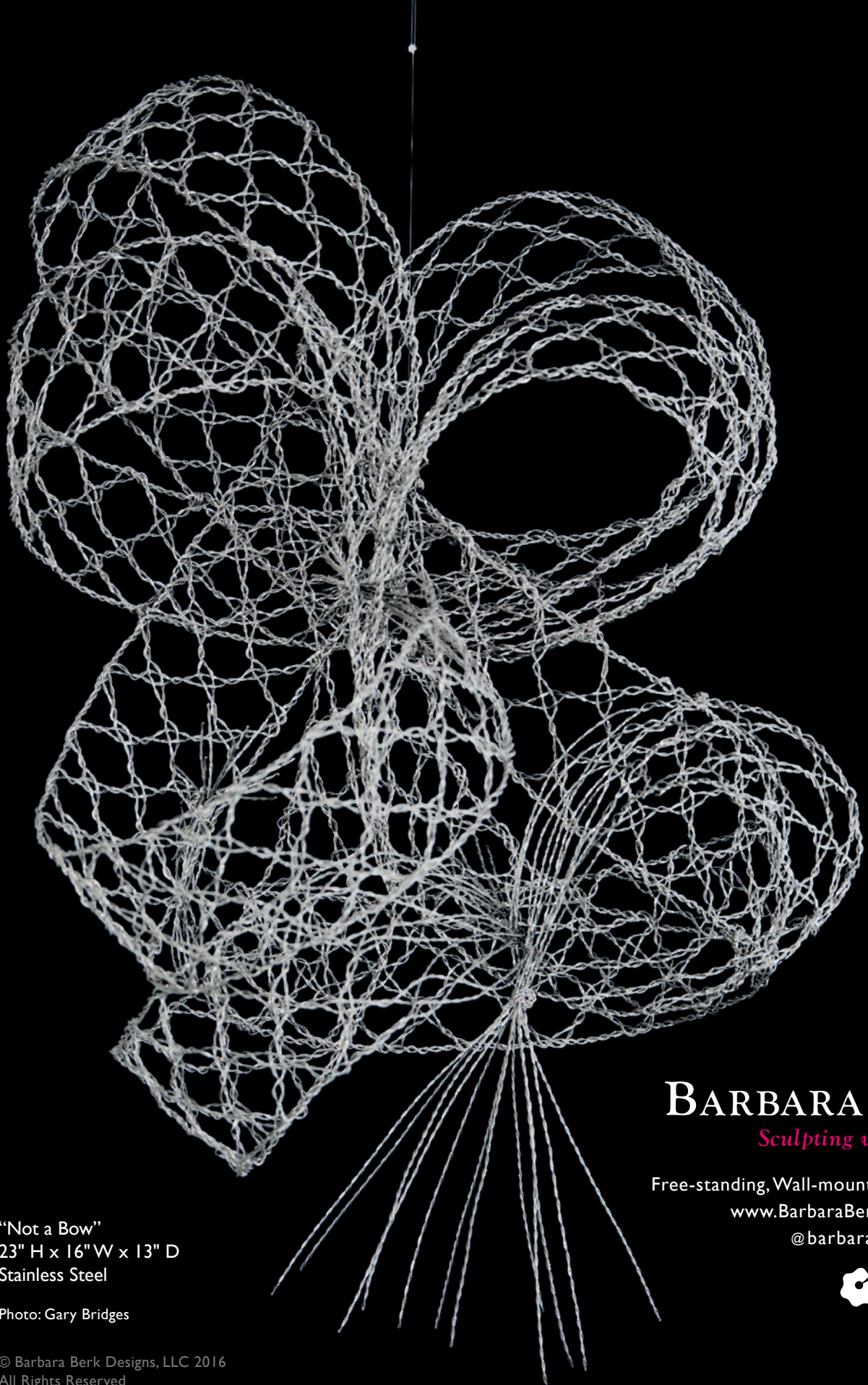

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METALSMITH

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Golddust. That was the playful name of what began in 1975 as a bimonthly newsletter to SNAG members, which later became the quarterly *Goldsmith's Journal* from 1977 to 1979, and was expanded into *Metalsmith* magazine in 1980. This issue kicks off the fortieth volume of *Metalsmith*. In the inaugural foreword, editor Sarah Bodine noted that *Metalsmith* was fulfilling "the need for a vehicle through which craftsmen can communicate." She goes on to say that crafts such as goldsmithing were "no longer community or guild-based but worldwide."

Four decades later, this observation feels particularly astute, even prescient—if not somewhat quaint, from the position of hindsight, in a moment when there are more ways than ever before for artists to share ideas on a global scale.

It feels natural to start both a new decade and a new volume reflecting on where we've been and where we're going. Each of the three artists featured in this issue will likely be familiar to readers, and they've been featured in previous issues of *Metalsmith*. However, each essay offers exciting new perspectives, voices, and research on each seasoned artist, within the context of their career and the field as a whole. Ana Estrades's essay on Mary Ann Scherr is based on thorough primary source research into the artist's life and work. Similarly, Elizabeth Essner revisits Funk jeweler Merrily Tompkins, questioning the conditions and causes of what Essner refers to as her "under-knowness." Both essays present questions, though indirectly, about how we record and preserve histories, particularly of women. Robert Lee Morris's career path is the dream of many artists, but his next step is uncharted territory: he is embracing the auction market as an opportunity for legacy building. Author Bella Neyman's conversations with Morris explore his past and future. And in advance of the forty-ninth annual SNAG conference, *Grit to Gold: Future Fifty*, Sarah Darro explains and illustrates Philadelphia's longstanding legacy as a craft-centric city.

Throughout the year we are celebrating *Metalsmith's* forty-year milestone by uploading all of the magazine's covers and tables of contents to snagspace.org. We hope the site will serve as a research and reference resource until the day when all 157 issues (and counting) are fully digitized. We also invite submission to the New Voices Writing Contest (deadline February 16); the winner will be announced during the annual conference. I hope you will join us in Philadelphia to celebrate both *Metalsmith* and SNAG.

In closing, I'd like to make my usual plea for your engagement by sharing the final words from Sarah Bodine's 1980 foreword: "You must consider this magazine an important link in the educational chain. Through it you must pass along knowledge, discoveries and ideas to support individual growth and to make metalsmithing a recognizable force."

I hope to hear from you: editor@snagmetalsmith.org.

—Adriane Dalton, Editor

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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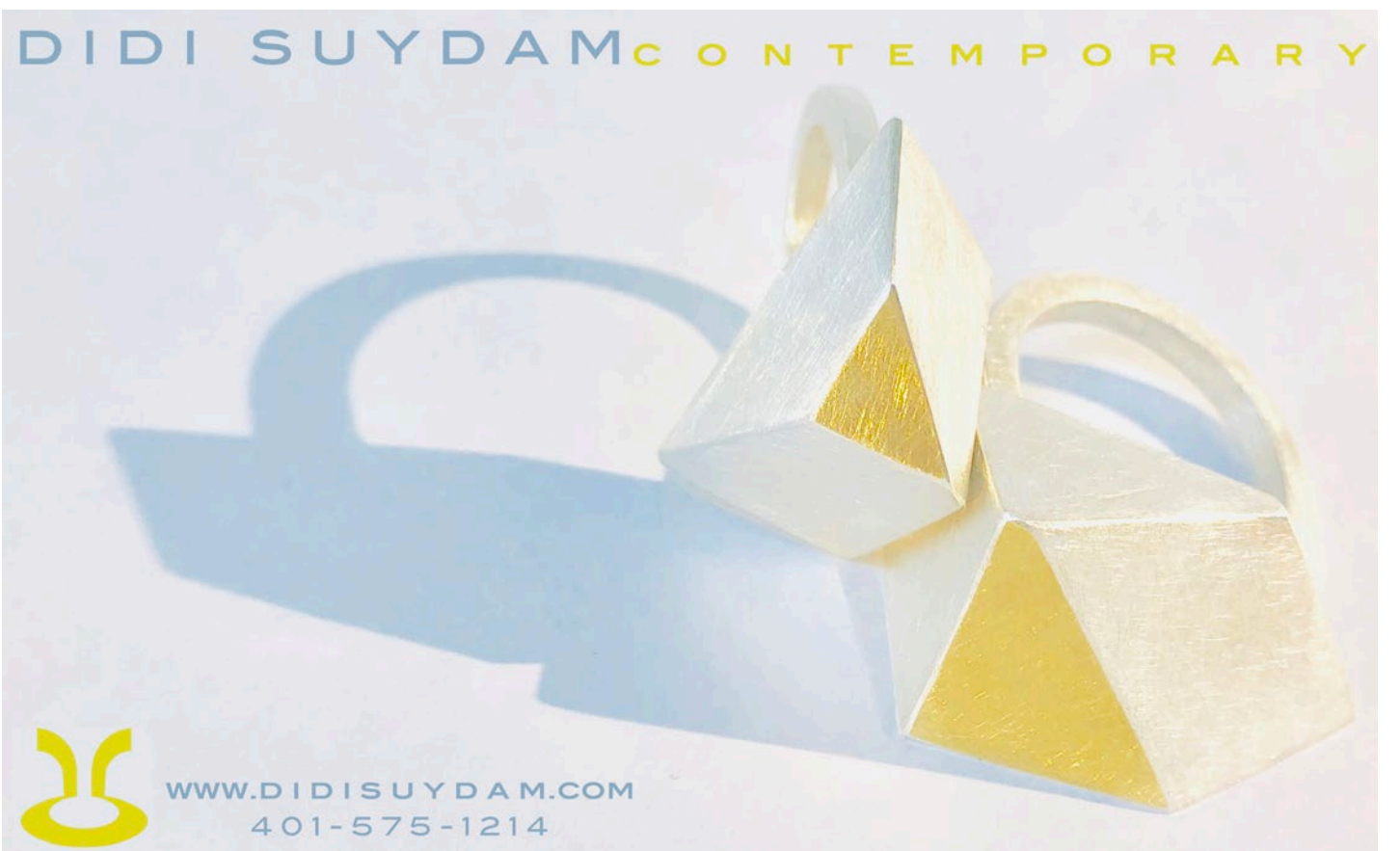

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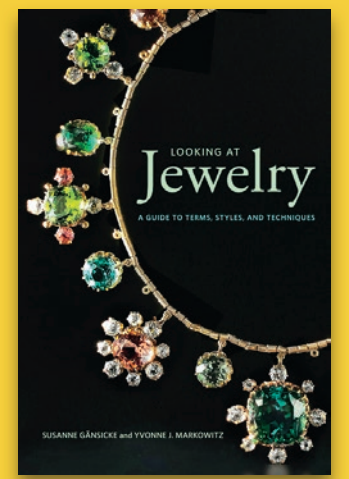

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A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques

Susanne Gänsicke and Yvonne J. Markowitz

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SNAG's 49th Annual Conference features inspiring presentations, exhibitions and events that give participants the opportunity to engage in conversation about critical issues in the fields of metalsmithing and jewelry. The conference will celebrate the diversity of SNAG's members and investigate the challenges we will face together over the next fifty years.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CANNUPA HANSKA LUGER

Cannupa Hanska Luger is a multi-disciplinary artist of Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota descent. Using social collaboration and in response to timely and site-specific issues, Luger produces multi-pronged projects provoking diverse publics to engage with Indigenous peoples and values apart from the lens of colonial social structuring. Luger is a 2019 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Honoree and the recipient of the 2018 Museum of Arts and Design's inaugural Burke Prize. He exhibits, lectures and participates in projects globally.

Luger's presentation will open the conference and touch upon topics to be explored further in the program, including community engagement, sustainable practice and diversity, equity and inclusion.

CAPSTONE SPEAKER: NORA ATKINSON

Nora Atkinson is the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum. Named *Washingtonian Magazine's* 2018 "Best Boundary-Pushing Curator" for her work on *No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man (2018)* and *Murder Is Her Hobby (2017)*, she has curated four original exhibitions and authored two publications since joining the museum.

Atkinson's talk will close the conference with a focus on the importance of human connection as an historical thread that continues into the future of art and craft.

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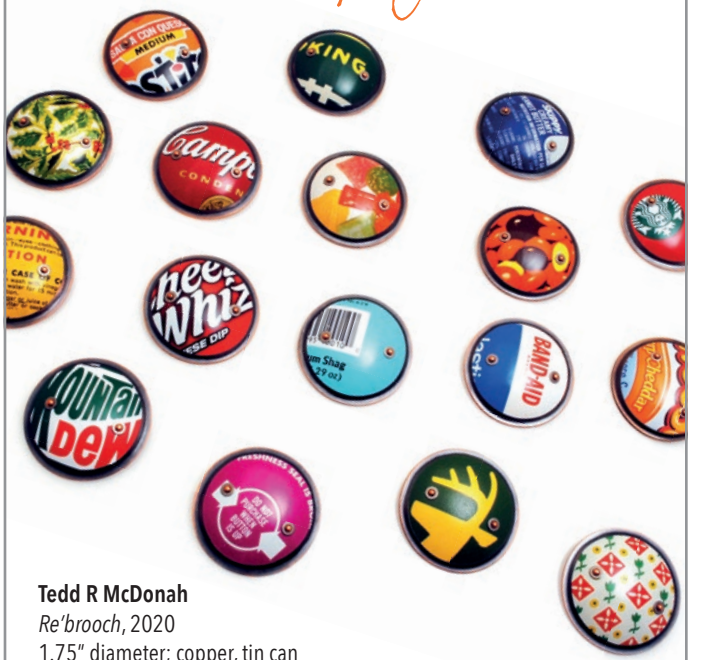

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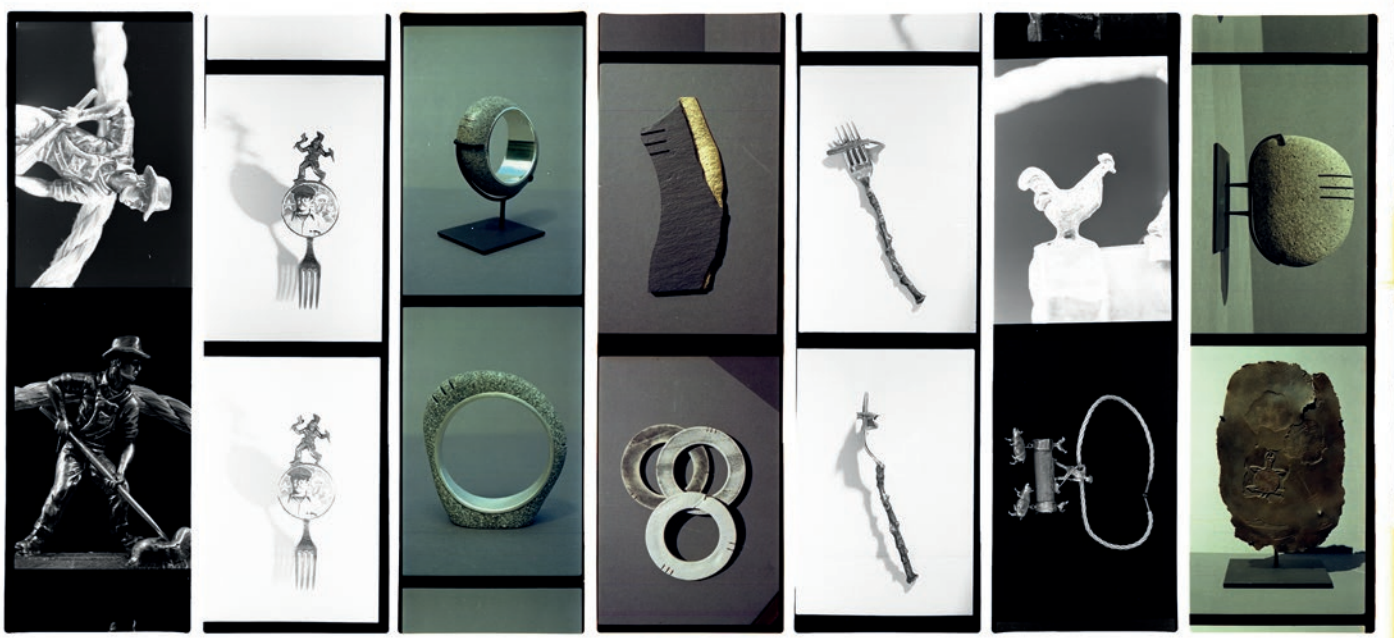

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY SASHA NIXON

Welding party at the Catbird welding annex, May 2018

Courtesy: Catbird

PERMANENT JEWELRY

The concept of permanent jewelry—jewelry that the wearer cannot remove, rather than simply chooses not to—is not new in Western jewelry culture. In fact, Romans knotted the ends of ear-wires to secure them permanently onto their ears.[1] Jewelry commonly carries sentimental meaning, and is frequently used to mark life-changing events, such as marriage, graduation, induction into a society, or the birth of a child. Jewelry designers have recently begun to offer welded bracelets as a new way to celebrate that tradition. Not only that, they have designed dedicated settings for the application of these bracelets. These spaces recognize the experience as meaningful in itself.

Perhaps the most iconic example of permanent jewelry is Cartier's *Love* bracelet, created in 1969. Secured on the wrist with small screws, this bracelet requires a specialized screwdriver to remove it. This permanent closure suggests the enduring presence of love, an extension and expression of everlasting affection and a symbol of that bond.

The advent of the laser welder has enabled designers to take the next step in permanent jewelry, and offer customers the opportunity to have a bracelet custom-fit and welded onto their wrist. Los Angeles jewelry designer Hannah Keefe creates slender wire bangle bracelets. Jewelry brands like Finn, Love Billy!, and Catbird in New York City, and L'Essenziale in Paris, provide a variety of barely-there chains that can be welded onto the wearer's wrist. This new and intimate way of exposing the public to jewelrymaking tools and techniques provides an opportunity to talk to the makers themselves. This interaction adds a layer of importance to the purchase, enriching the memory associated with the piece.

Catbird in Brooklyn has dedicated a separate welding annex for fitting permanent jewelry. Sriya Karumanchi, Catbird's marketing manager, says there is "something inherently precious in wanting to keep something close to you always. The permanency of it seems to also be a way to mark a moment or milestone, or a way to signify a relationship in your life." The welding process becomes a bonding experience for friends, family, or couples. The ritual is reminiscent of getting tattooed together, but in a way that is less painful and requires less commitment. In both cases, it is about the shared experience, with a lasting visual tie to a memory.

Like Cartier's *Love* bracelet, welded bracelets can be removed, but instead of a tiny screwdriver, these bracelets must be clipped off, essentially destroying them. The *appearance* of permanence that these bracelets offer—without the finality of tattooing or body modification—is what appeals to so many.

Tattoo by Arielle Gagnon at Deathless Tattoo, Montreal

Courtesy: Arielle Gagnon

INKED JEWELRY

Dana Hurwitz and Mariah Pershadsingh, the founders of Bond Hardware, a New York City studio that offers a variety of edgy jewelry pieces, feel that the combination of jewelry and tattooing is natural. They say that their jewelry "feels a lot like a tattoo... it's an extension of yourself that you never have to take off." Bond Hardware often collaborates with local tattoo artists in pop-up events where participants can choose from a flash sheet (a page of premade tattoo illustrations) inspired by Bond Hardware designs or the Bond logo itself. Their most recent event was with tattoo artist Rose Anger.

Both jewelry and tattoos have been used to adorn the body since antiquity, and as such have both served as indicators of social standing, allegiances, and protection. This relationship has become even more prevalent as the growing social acceptance and technical advancement of tattoos has led to a rise in tattoos of jewelry. Some tattoo artists like Arielle Gagnon in Montreal specialize in the illustration of jewelry. Gagnon says, "I think it adds a nice punch to a piece. Jewelry's purpose has always been to capture attention, to cause fascination and marvel, and I think it does that in tattoos as well. I think people like it for the same reason that they like the real thing, because it's beautiful." Where dermal implants and other body modifications have allowed individuals to wear metal and gemstones embedded in and under their skin, the gems in Gagnon's tattoos transform the body into the image of a jewel, as opposed to incorporating jewels into the body. Her gems are larger than life and clients seek her out as a way of adorning their skin with gems, gold, and pearls in a dramatic way. Others go to Gagnon to recreate a significant piece of jewelry, so that they can carry it with them always.

Tattoo by Grez at Kings Avenue Tattoo, New York City

Courtesy: Sarah Holden

Sarah Holden, a studio jeweler for more than ten years, commemorated the inaugural year of New York City Jewelry Week with a jewelry tattoo by Grez at Kings Avenue Tattoo. For her, having a jewelry tattoo as a jeweler "reinforces my commitment to the field and to my practice through permanence." She chose bamboo hoop earrings because, she says, "I love the variety of styles they come in, how they are a statement, the badass women that wear them and the history of resistance that they represent. ...'Stay Gold,' or stay true to yourself, seemed like the perfect motto."

Sasha Nixon is an independent curator, jewelry historian, metalsmith. She is a member of the Museum of Arts and Design's Exhibition Design and Installation team and a critic at the Rhode Island School of Design. She was awarded the 2017 Society of North American Goldsmiths' Emerging Curators Grant.

1 Traditional jewelry should be presented in its cultural context. Because of this, in this article, we keep to Western traditions. Permanent jewelry also has a long history outside of the Western world. Examples include the neck rings of the Kayan and South Ndebele peoples.

PASHA MOEZZI: BRASS WITH CLASS

BY ANDREA DINOTO

ONE DAY IN 2008, Pasha Moezzi was helping out in his father's furniture workshop, a well-established business in Tehran, when he noticed a piece of brass stuck in a table saw. "It had cross marks, two lines crossing one straight line," he says "and it was my aha moment. I instantly envisioned the piece as a cuff, and began making them from scraps found around."

After another employee said of Moezzi's cuffs, "Cool, make more," he began to refine and wear them, finding that "everybody loved them." The unisex brass adornments have become the mainstay for his Toronto-based company Pasha Design, which also produces colorful leather and brass bracelets, along with necklaces, earrings, and rings—some in brass, others in silver and gold—all in a spare, clean modernist style.

Sun cuff, 2009
Brass
6 mm square rod
by 15 cm length
Photo: Justin Bach

Though born and raised in Tehran, Moezzi was educated in Canada, which is not unusual, as Toronto is home to thousands of Iranian expats; hence the city's nickname, "Tehranto."

"I was seventeen when my mother—one of my heroes—brought my brother and me to Vancouver to attend high school," says Moezzi, now thirty-six. He went on to attend Montreal's Concordia University, earning a BFA in 2006. He also holds a diploma in jewelry arts from Toronto's George Brown College, where his thesis collection reflected a long-held fascination with futuristic, architectural, and geometric forms. This passion, he says, was sparked by the iconic 1927 silent film *Metropolis*, with its expressionist imagery and bold Art Deco styling. Moezzi's recent one-off *Cleopatra* necklace—radiating brass rods that lie on the body like an inverted sunburst—can't help but evoke the Chrysler Building's iconic dome, intentionally or not.

Moezzi holds dual citizenship and visits his homeland often, but after his immersion in Canada's free-wheeling art scene, he found it difficult to adapt back to Iran's patriarchal culture. "In the Middle East, men who wear jewelry are considered lower class," he says. "In my conservative family, we were never allowed to wear chains or bracelets, and now I never leave home without a cuff and my watch." Initially, Moezzi's father, whose furniture company is highly regarded in Tehran's design community, was skeptical about his son's choice of jewelry as a métier. Still, he encouraged him to study subjects such as architecture and industrial design that could be applied in different scales. The result can be seen in the sleek linearity and geometrical approach to form and pattern in Moezzi's work. His signature cuffs (literally: each is signed "Pasha Design") are sawn from brass rod. "I take the center line out with a table saw," he explains, "forcing the rod in the opposite direction of the saw's rotation." Notches, done with a band saw, are sometimes inlaid with silver, glass, or colorful resins. As brass will break if squeezed to adjust to fit, Moezzi produces the cuffs in varying sizes, or will custom-design for any wrist size. Buffed to a sheen or a high shine, cuffs lend themselves to artful stacking, a style that many of his customers, he says, "find addictive," and they appreciate the affordable price range as well (many cuffs are under $200).

Top:
Brass, silver, and silver inlaid in brass cuffs modeled by Jayde Violet

Photo: Justin Bach

Cle-Ö necklace, 2007
Brass, hand cut glass
6 mm square rods and the longest piece is 8.5 cm gradually getting shorter to about 1.2 cm
Photo: Nazanin Peykar-Ara

Where marketing is concerned, Moezzi has the dual-citizen's advantage of an established presence both in Tehran—via family and gallery connections—and Toronto, where he participates in many of the city's art/craft fairs and gallery shows. From 2015 to 2018 he was artist-in-residence at Toronto's prestigious Harbourfront Centre Craft and Design Studio, and in 2018, at the city's Offsite Design Festival he collaborated with a glass artist to create a piece of "architectural jewelry" as a window display for an optician's store.

Looking to connect with the art jewelry scene in the States, Moezzi joined SNAG in 2012, and subsequently participated in two annual-conference trunk shows, one of which resulted in a fortuitous connection with the Metal Museum in Memphis; his work now sells in their store. In 2019 he traveled to Chicago for SNAG's forty-ninth annual conference, "particularly excited," he says, "to be visiting the city where the first skyscrapers were erected." Although unable to afford the attendance fee, Moezzi reported on off-site events and exhibitions for the website of MetalAid, the Canadian jewelry collaborative. "The first event I attended was a pop-up hosted by our very own Noël Guyomarc'h," he wrote, "where the always breathtaking enamel work of Montréal-based Aurélie Guillaume was on view." And at a meeting with noted Chicago-based jewelry artist Kiff Slemmons, he reported, "she went over some of her work with such excitement that it made me want to get back home, sit behind my bench and never leave."[1]

Always seeking new venues in which to learn and connect, Moezzi reached out to NYCJW 2018 (New York's first-annual Jewelry Week), volunteering to help the social media team deal with Instagram and Twitter. "It was a magnificent experience," he says. "I went to three or four events every day, and networked like crazy." In 2019, he returned to participate in three NYCJW shows: one, organized with MetalAid at the Canadian Consulate, featured a digital exhibition of contemporary Canadian jewelry; another was a group show organized by Sarah Rachel Brown; and finally, a pop-up by Chicago's Gallery 2052 for NYCJW.

Moezzi estimates networking accounts for about seventy percent of annual sales through stores, fairs, and shows. "Thirty percent or so comes from Instagram, and the balance from family and friends within Canada's style-conscious LBGTQ and Persian communities. And," he adds, "I'm particularly grateful that from the very beginning the Persian community in Iran has been so encouraging to me."

https://www.pashamoezzi.com/
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Andrea DiNoto writes about art, craft, and design.

1 Read the full report at https://www.metalaidcanada.com/snag-conference-2019

TO DREAM IS TO DECIDE: IN THE STUDIO WITH JULIA WALTER

BY KELLIE RIGGS

A portrait of Julia Walter in her studio with a "little twist"

Photo: Julia Walter

I'M IN NEW YORK on a weekday evening. Six hours ahead, across the Atlantic, my video call is answered by a sweet face floating in darkness. On a visit to her family at her mother's house in Stuttgart, not far from where she grew up, Julia Walter is the only one still awake. A lit candle helps illuminate her face; she's outside among the humming cicadas, smoking one of her sister's cigarettes. She doesn't say anything, because she has a plastic pair of vampire teeth in her mouth, and she's laughing. It's kind of raining, but she doesn't seem to care. I'm also laughing, though none of this is exactly out of the ordinary; this is Julia.

Julia and I first met on the streets of Munich in 2013. Through friends we got close over the years, and we eventually made a habit of "hanging out" over video chat when I still lived overseas until the summer of last year. She'd have beers in her studio in Amsterdam, while I'd have wine on my couch in Florence. We'd stay up late smoking and chatting about jewelry mostly, but also about the world, last night's dreams, and future ideas. It was all sort of the same thing. And there is always a unique ease when to speaking with Julia, an ease that somehow contradicts her intensity and passion. She is fiercely opinionated, but wildly open and imaginative at the same time. It's this very combination that indicates profound authenticity; it's assurance that when she's in front of you, you know exactly what you are getting.

I choose to introduce Walter in this way because her work is defined by the same attitude and sense of self. Walter's jewelry is both mysterious and direct, if that's even possible. She succeeds in embedding an impressive level of transparency in all that she creates. She doesn't seem to have anything to hide.

In the past, the seeds to some of Walter's eventual pieces have been known to come to her in her sleep. Her 2016 collection *Dream Dialogues*, for example, is exactly what it sounds like. The moment she woke up, she would make a drawing, converting whatever vision she had into something she could work with later in the studio. Exalted line and form would later come to life as amorphous, anthropomorphic amulets made from galalith (milk stone), or 200-year-old Japanese oak, hung simply from cord.

Though dreams and personal mysticism are sources of inspiration for Walter, she asserts that her practice isn't as intuition-based as people assume. She allows ample time to play through drawing, cutting, and collaging in paper, long before she touches the final material. During our dark and stormy evening chat, she told me: "It's a huge luxury to be in a mode of carving out long periods of time to take a bath in your own thoughts, time

Rings, 2018
Clockwise from top: grafic granite; koral jasper; blood jasper; lavender jade; leopard serpentine
Various dimensions
Photo: Julia Walter

Dreamer, 2017
Chromed steel,
2 mm wire
27 x 37 cm
Photo: Julia Walter

to just look at every angle of an idea. I really love being able to draw."

Walter works in a shared space in Amsterdam called Studio 3000. Its two rooms, beautiful and bright, face the canal on street level. Here she and her two studio mates host informal "salons" twice yearly, where they host other artists and invite their neighbors as well as collectors to see their work. The studio is open and unfussy, like her work, a direct conduit between Walter and her output. She describes: "It's a little facet of my dream to have a project room and a space for a soirée. I think the salon is a very good example of my love of bringing people together, people from all kinds of fields, all kinds of interests, positions, etc. There we are free from obligations."

During 2018 and 2019 Walter was at the studio a little less, due to teaching gigs, and a residency at Hochschule Trier's Department of Gemstones and Jewellery in Idar-Oberstein, a small German town known for its stonecutting traditions. The latter was an interesting shift in Walter's largely 2D practice, which she states she had to work hard to cultivate over a period of time. Many of her earliest works in fact were made of carved wood and very much determined by material innateness, so perhaps this moment can be described as a return to 3D. The colorful solid stone rings she made during her residency, crude and artifact-esque, play with domestic archetypes and symbols, like the house or stairs. But she tells me that she is not sure where this work will go, which demonstrates her embrace of getting distracted by other impulses, and her peace with leaving things behind for a time, if need be.

This shift is also spurred by Walter's indiscriminate love for all and any material. In the past she's worked with etching and aluminum, or animated painting on wood. Within the last two years, her improvisational doodles in chrome wire have become minimal yet authoritative earrings. And experiments with clay and bone, plaster and paint, and even dyed silk with gold-leaf faces (which will become capes) are taking place as she gets back into the studio more regularly. Her approach to this new body of work, which debuted in a solo show at Galerie Marzee (Nijmegen, the Netherlands) in November 2019, was the product of working through a stream of consciousness. As she would decisively cut symmetrical shapes in paper, a process which she claims she was not in control of, she would think, "Eyes, nose, mouth. Sausage, a smiley, a snake. Which are they?"

Walter's newest work once again recalls her devotion to her dreams, revisiting some of her former imagery, but plumping them up: "They aren't flat anymore; they are wobbly." Billowy, painted clouds, shape-shifting animals, and even egg-shaped rattles will appear in one form or another. At the time of our interview, she wasn't quite sure of what they would become, but nor was she worried. Julia can trust her body and her mind to sort it out.

It's as she always says: "There is no master plan."

Kellie Riggs is a writer, critic, and curator with a focus on contemporary jewelry. She received her BFA in Jewelry + Metalsmithing at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2011, and upon graduating received a Fulbright Grant to Italy, where she lived for seven years between Rome and Florence. She has been an external editor at Dutch platform and magazine Current Obsession*, with whom she co-curated the exhibition CULT at the Design Museum den Bosch in 2016. Kellie has recently relocated to New York City to earn an arts management Masters at NYU, meanwhile having curated a* New York Times*—reviewed exhibition for the Museum of Arts and Design called Non-Stick Nostalgia.*

Happy Faces, 2016
Plywood, paint, cotton string
20 x 16 x ½ cm
Photo: Julia Walter

LOOT 2020: THE 20TH EDITION OF *LOOT: MAD ABOUT JEWELRY*

BY BRYNA POMP

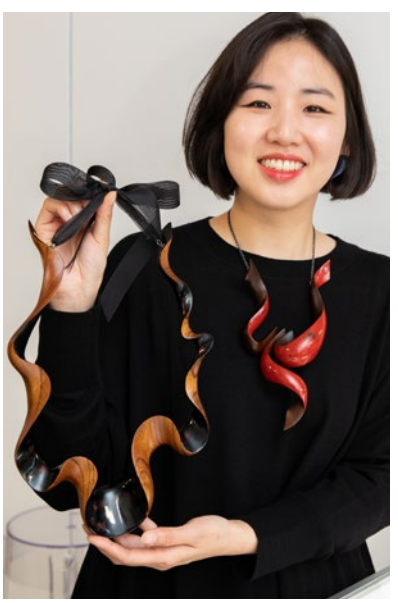
Bryna Pomp, LOOT Curator; Barbara Tober, Chairman Emerita, Board of Trustees, Museum of Arts and Design; and Michele Cohen, Chairman Emerita, Board of Trustees, Museum of Arts and Design

Photo: Jenna Bascom

GROUNDBREAKING, INSIGHTFUL, AND BRILLIANT are the words that come to mind when I think about the decision made by a small, informed group at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in the early 1990s to hold a sale of contemporary jewelry on site. The goal was to enable museum members and the general public to actually purchase jewelry like that on exhibition.

Those were the days when the institution was located on West 53rd Street, and was known as the American Craft Museum. The sale, entitled "Gold and Silver," was largely organized and curated by Laura Kruger, who still remains closely tied to MAD decades later.

Fast forward to Monday, April 20, 2020, when the twentieth edition of LOOT (so renamed in the early 2000s) will kick off its weeklong run through Sunday, April 26. Since MAD's move to its present location at 2 Columbus Circle, LOOT has become an annual event held each April. It has become the most important sale of international contemporary jewelry in America.



JooHyun Park, a recipient of the LOOT Acquisition Prize, 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

I have served as curator for ten editions of LOOT, and my goal each year is to select artists who are creating some of the most innovative contemporary jewelry worldwide. In addition to a breadth of work in metals that includes gold, silver, brass, bronze, titanium, and aluminum, the pieces at LOOT are fabricated from many other materials such as glass, wood, textiles, silicone, resin, and paper. A requirement for each participating artist is their presence at the show, in order to interact with visitors and to discuss their creative process and choice of materials.

I am often asked if there's a theme to each edition of LOOT, and my answer is consistently that it's the same theme every year: diversity. By diversity, I mean: of materials and design directions; geographically, with artists from usually at least twenty countries from multiple continents each year; and career-wise, from artists just graduated from the finest jewelry and metalsmithing departments to those already well established. I am proud that in recent years approximately thirty percent of the jewelers have been young emerging artists. I like to think of LOOT as an incubator for artists who will evolve to become the leaders in the field of contemporary jewelry going forward.

As with all of the jewelry exhibitions at MAD, LOOT celebrates the imaginations and creative possibilities of the best makers in the field. With the twentieth anniversary garnering increased visibility and guest of honor, Stellene Volandes, Editor in Chief, *Town & Country* magazine, this exhibition will be an even more jubilant celebration of the art of contemporary jewelry-making.

Bryna Pomp is a contemporary jewelry specialist and Curator of LOOT: MAD About Jewelry *at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York.*

LOOT 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Isabelle Molénat and her work at LOOT 2018

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Vania Ruiz
The Navigator, 2018
Resin, synthetic fabric, varnish, ink, plastic
11 x 9 x 5 cm
Photo: Nicolás Nadjar

Augustina Ros and her work at LOOT 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Helmi Lindblom
Love the Way the Sun Shines Through Your Ears, 2017
Shell, silver, gold, steel, translucent balloon
Photo: Laura Pulkkinen

Tara Locklear's display at LOOT 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Patricia Alvarez's work at LOOT 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Mariko Kusumoto, a recipient of the juried LOOT Acquisition Prize, 2019

Photo: Jenna Bascom

Apinya Oo Boonprakob
Eternally Yours, Flower, 2019
18 x 39 x 2½ cm
Sterling silver, fragments of Batik stamping tool, Swarovski crystal
Photo: Sakwarin Sawetsomboon

METALSMITHING IN THE CRAFT CAPITAL

BY SARAH DARRO

SOL MINTZ worked out of a small storefront on Jewelers' Row in Philadelphia. He was my grandfather's jeweler, and the individual entrusted with his most valuable possessions. Sol was consulted for wedding rings, anniversary gifts, and repairs throughout his life. My parents, a generation later, also adopted a jeweler on the Row, from whom they acquired their gold wedding bands.

The familial connections to jewelers and the intricate social networks sustained through jewelry in Philadelphia are characteristic of a greater sense of community in the city's craft scene and ecosystem. Jewelers' Row has continuously operated as a commercial jewelry district since the late nineteenth century. This trade center, whose business practices haven't changed a great deal over the last century, has supplied materials and tools to generations of artists whose interests and concerns with the material have evolved dramatically—from the designer-craftsmen of early Philadelphia industrial art schools to artists, professors, and jewelers of the studio craft movement. Today, jewelers from metalsmithing programs at Tyler School of Art and the University of the Arts continue to source raw material from the Row, and rotate in and out of side hustles doing production work for some of the same historic family-owned jewelry businesses.

Jewelers' Row in Philadelphia in 2019

Photo: Sarah Darro

Philadelphia's history as a locus of metalwork, craft, and industrial production is encoded into its very infrastructure and urban genetics. Jewelers' Row on Sansom Street is the nation's oldest diamond district and was home to the first architectural example of an identical, contiguous rowhouse. It was designed as a speculative housing solution by architect-carpenter Thomas Carstairs for William Sansom between 1800 and 1802, and this architectural model was later adopted across the burgeoning city to house industrial workers. The rowhouse is the most prominent architectural form in the city, and has become iconic of Philadelphia itself. Both my grandfather and his jeweler, Sol, grew up in rowhouses based off of the Carstairs Row model on New Street in Olde City, blocks away from the first United States Mint.

It was at the US Mint, founded in 1792 in Philadelphia, where the nation's first currency was pressed into metal form. Renowned Philadelphia-based metalsmith Stacey Lee Webber has become critically known for her bodies of work using American coinage. Her series "God Bless America" responds to Philadelphia's blue-

Louis Magaziner, "Rendering of Front Elevation," David Atlas & Company, Diamond Exchange, 721 Sansom St, Philadelphia, 1947

Courtesy of the Magaziner Collection, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

1979 image of Helen Drutt seated in front of a jewelry display inside her gallery on 1625 Spruce Street

Courtesy of Helen W. Drutt English

Installation image of Helen Drutt Gallery in a 1979 issue of *American Craft* (Volume 39, Number 4, page 31)

collar labor history. In the works, patterned, soldered sheets of pennies, which have been meticulously hand-cut, are worked into sculptural representations of the adorning elements of Philadelphia rowhouses: ribbons, flags, and sconces. Reflecting on labor and liberty, Webber's work is also tied to the materiality and symbolic history of Philadelphia's perhaps best known metal icon, the Liberty Bell, which was cast from copper and had to be recast and remolded numerous times after famously cracking during its first use.

Philadelphia was the nation's first capital, and today, it is being reframed as the "Craft Capital." Its rich, generative ecosystem of universities, galleries, museums, artists, and scholars over time have centered Philadelphia as a significant craft think tank and contributor to the field of metalsmithing. In 1909, master blacksmith Samuel Yellin founded a blacksmithing forge that brought Philadelphia to the fore of handcrafted metalwork in a time of increasing mechanization. In 1876, the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art (now the University of the Arts and the Philadelphia Museum of Art) was founded and in 1935, Temple University's Tyler School of Art was established. These universities both housed dedicated metals programs that are still in operation and nationally distinguished. They have each nurtured significant contributors to contemporary jewelry as professors and students.

In 1967, a few of those eminent metalsmiths and professors, Stanley Lechtzin and Olaf Skoogfors, alongside craft historian, gallerist and collector Helen Drutt, established the Philadelphia Council of Professional Craftsmen (PCPC). PCPC was a craft advocacy group that raised the national profile of craft artists. Just two years later, in 1969, the Society of North American Goldsmiths was formed. In 1973, Helen Drutt Gallery was established in Philadelphia, and represented significant practitioners of studio craft, including some of the most prominent jewelers of the twentieth century, while it was in operation. In 1986, Sharon Church, a distinguished Philadelphia-based metalsmith and professor at the University of the Arts, reviewed a solo exhibition of Arline Fisch at Helen Drutt Gallery in *Metalsmith*: "There is a sense of drama here. The gallery is dark, the room recedes, the cases glow. The work is colorful, large, suggestive of the body form and poised for the animation that adornment will bring. This is Arline Fisch's knitted-wire jewelry at the Helen Drutt Gallery, a group of work that is mature and highly resolved."

Philadelphia ardently supported these avant-garde expressions of studio

Images of Jewelers' Row in Philadelphia in 2019

Photos: Sarah Darro

Olaf Skoogfors, *Brooch*, 1975
Gilded silver, ivory, pearl
This piece was featured in *Wrought and Crafted: Jewelry and Metalwork 1900–Present* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2009.
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, purchased with funds contributed by Collab: The Group for Modern and Contemporary Design at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Women's Committee and the Craft Show Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976-2-1.

jewelry. In 1984, Drutt organized the groundbreaking *Jewelry USA* and *Jewelry International* exhibitions with Paul Smith at the American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) and she juried it alongside Sharon Church. Philadelphia has been home to a number of prominent galleries representing studio craft artists since the 1960s. Works Gallery was founded in 1965 by Ruth Snyderman (later Snyderman-Works Gallery in 1972); Moderne Gallery was founded in 1984 by Robert Aibel; and Wexler Gallery was founded in 2000 by Lewis and Sherri Wexler. In 2015, Clara Hollander and David Seltzer launched CraftNOW, an organization that has galvanized a multitude of Philadelphia craft institutions, galleries, museums, universities, civic organizations, and individuals around the mission of establishing Philadelphia as a craft capital and incubator for the future of the field.

Among the host of craft institutions in Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) boasts an expansive collection of jewelry and metalworking. The current Associate Curator of American Modern and Contemporary Crafts and Decorative Arts, Elisabeth Agro, has not only dedicated exhibitions to Philadelphia's rich metalworking history (for example, *Wrought and Crafted: Jewelry and Metalwork 1900–Present*, which was presented at the PMA in 2009 in conjunction with the fortieth anniversary SNAG conference), but she also co-founded Critical Craft Forum with Namita Wiggers in 2008, which has become an essential digital resource for the field. In 1977, the Women's Committee of the PMA also launched the immensely popular annual Philadelphia Craft Show, which continues today and has a significant jewelry presence.

The communal spirit and almost familial interconnections of the Philadelphia metalsmithing community can perhaps best be understood through the informal book clubs, salons, and collectives that have been developed by craft artists and scholars in the city over time. In the late 2000s, studio craft historian and jeweler Bruce Metcalf organized a craft book club that was attended by jewelers Sharon Church and Doug Bucci, curator Jennifer Zwilling, and stained glass artist Judith Schaechter, among others. Today, there is an active group of craft curators who meet in Philadelphia to discuss the state of the field, among them Emily Zilber, a former editor of *Metalsmith*.

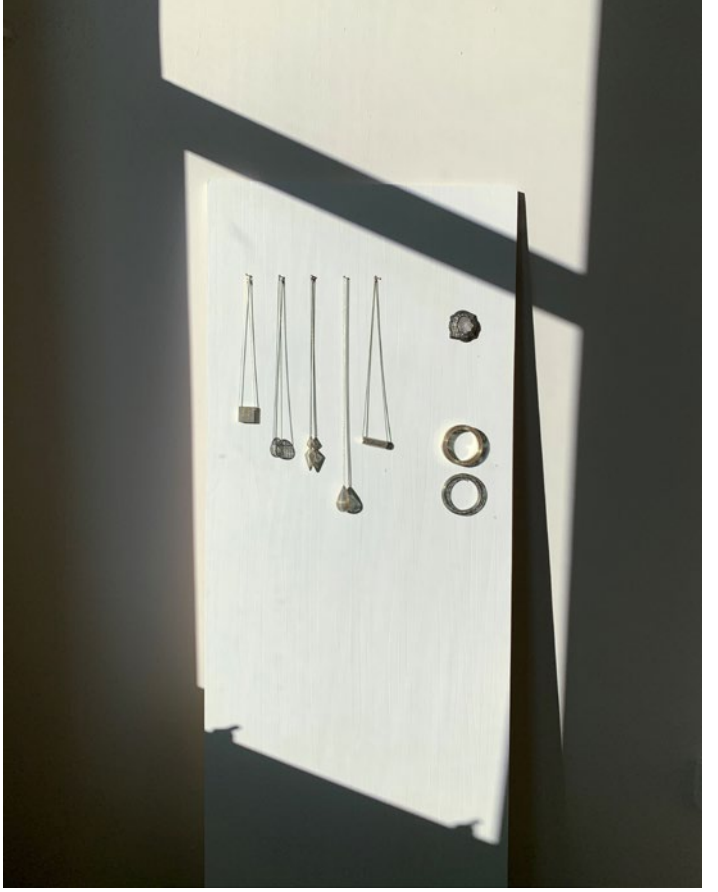
Further, there are a number of active jewelry collectives in Philadelphia founded by emerging and mid-career artists. Dubbed "A New Jewelers' Row in South Philly" by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in 2017, the BOK building, a decommissioned vocational school converted into artist studios in South Philly, houses two female-run jewelry collectives: JV Collective and Night Shift Studio. JV Collective is made up of Melanie Bilenker, Leslie Boyd, Sarah Rachel Brown, Emily Cobb, Maria Eife, Luci Jockel, and Mallory Weston. All formidable contemporary jewelers, this group shares studio space as well as exhibits together in their newly opened gallery space in BOK, as well as at NYC and Munich Jewelry weeks.

Night Shift Studio has a slightly different model, pooling resources and equipment as well as renting studio space to artists short-term. Ellyse Bendillo, founder of Night Shift Studio, learned about JV Collective from an episode of the *Perceived Value Podcast*, hosted by JV Collective member, Sarah Rachel Brown, and was inspired to start a collective that could support the studio practice of emerging jewelers in the city. What links Philadelphia's metals scene and its artists, students, teachers, and scholars is a uniquely

supportive, almost familial connective tissue. This community support is tied to a legacy of historical family connections in Philadelphia that have driven and continue to drive the oldest commercial jewelry district in the United States.

In 2020, SNAG's forty-ninth annual conference, "Grit to Gold: Future Fifty," will descend on America's Craft Capital. Philadelphia was the heart of revolutionary America, and though it is no longer the nation's capital, it holds a significant role as a national incubator for contemporary craft. SNAG's convening will aptly be set within this revolutionary context as the field discusses the trajectory of the next half century, in which jewelry and metalsmithing will respond and adapt to rapidly evolving concerns and technologies.

Sarah Darro is a curator of contemporary craft, material culture, and design. She was named the 2019 American Craft Council Emerging Voices Awards Scholar and in 2018 she received the Houston Art Alliance Let Creativity Express Grant. She recently completed a Windgate Curatorial Fellowship at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and a curatorial internship at the Corning Museum of Glass.



Maria Eife's work on view at the JV Collective Gallery at the Bok Building in South Philadelphia

Photo courtesy of Sarah Rachel Brown

Stacey Lee Webber
God Bless America Series: Flags, 2011
Pennies, brass
Photo: Joseph Leroux
Courtesy of
Stacey Lee Webber

Van Duck

FINDING MERRILY TOMPKINS

By Elizabeth Essner

Portrait of Merrily Tompkins in her home studio

Photo: Rex Rystedt
Courtesy of the Estate of Merrily Tompkins

I was sitting in educator and former gallerist Helen Drutt's legendary Philadelphia archive in 2014 when I first opened the records of Merrily Tompkins.

Snatch Purse, 1975
Pendant/purse/belt
Sterling silver, copper, enamel, beaver fur, ermine tails, leather, velvet cord, satin lining
4½ x 4 x ⅜ in.
Courtesy of the Estate of Merrily Tompkins

In a series of black binders marked with her name, I found copies of Tompkins's sketchbooks, with fine-lined plans for pendants, and greetings to Drutt sealed with lipstick kisses.[1] Among the slides and images of Tompkins's work was a 4×5 transparency of *Snatch Purse*.

The piece is exactly what it sounds like: a handbag meant to be worn mid-torso, centered between the legs. A triangular patch of beaver fur is set against the leather coin purse. The latch above depicts a sterling silver repoussé tunnel, and a meticulous champlevé enamel train in locomotion. Open the latch and the train moves into the tunnel. The piece is racy, wry, and like any great joke, smart and dumb at the same time.

Snatch Purse reveals themes Tompkins would circumnavigate throughout her career—womanhood, unapologetic pleasure, visual puns—but it also seems to crystallize the moment of its making: 1975, when Dadaist tendencies and 1960s Pop had been chewed up by the forces of counterculture. What it spit out was hard to define and far less easy to swallow: the challenge to good taste often known as Funk.[2] Tompkins's roots are in the Funk Art movement's regional outcropping coined "Ellensburg Funky" by art critic Matthew Kangas, after the isolated Washington town and its cadre of funk and found-object jewelers, Tompkins among its central figures.[3]

Amidst the other archival records was an undated handwritten artist statement on torn onionskin paper. Surrounded by doodles and lists, Tompkins wrote:

> I love the stuff—thinking about where it's been—sending it out again….This body of work is about waking up early and looking out yr. bedroom window—you laying there staring at the branches in the tree outside… or the curtain print. finding words, initials, faces, a branch giving you the finger …. Some of the found objects I use, I remember just where + when + from whom I got it, under what circumstances—others I just have a good feeling about….[4]

Dad's Paydays, 1968
Sterling silver, photograph, fabric, found object
4½ x 4 x ¼ in.
Photo: Lynn Thompson
Courtesy of the Estate of Merrily Tompkins

You couldn't help but get a good feeling, too, about this cloudy vision of Tompkins and the complex body of work she created: part folk, part Funk, part found, with a tenderness that privileged crooked smiles, winks, and nods.

Over the years, context for Tompkins's work bubbled up in my research. Her birth in 1947 in Everett, Washington, a town not too far up the coastline from Seattle. The brilliant work and untimely death of her brother, Don Tompkins (1933–1982) under whom she studied at the renowned program at Central Washington College (now University) in Ellensburg. I learned of her home there that once belonged to fellow jeweler Ken Cory, her brother's equally brilliant replacement at CWU until his passing in 1994 at only fifty-one years old. Tompkins and I even exchanged a brief email. And then on April 21, 2018, she died unexpectedly at the age of seventy from complications of pneumonia.

While not prominent, per se, it would be hard to say that Tompkins was critically ignored. Her work is in museum collections from Los Angeles County Museum of Art to the Tacoma Art Museum to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She had a solo museum exhibition at the University of Washington's Henry Gallery in 1973, when she was a mere twenty-six years old. Over time, she was included in major group exhibitions and drew favorable reviews while showing at Seattle's prominent Linda Farris Gallery in the 1980s. But in her last major magazine profile in 2006, Ben Mitchell wrote that "…for some time now consideration of her work has been flying under the critical and curatorial establishment radar."[5] Since then, Tompkins's work has entered several touchstone museum collections, providing new insights, but her work remains unfamiliar to many.[6] Instead of overlooked, she might be described as under-known.

Tompkins is not alone in her under-knownness, a condition understood by many artists who have spent a lifetime making work—especially those whose output was quieted by motherhood for a time, as it was for Tompkins through the 1990s, while raising three boys. Yet, as many a museum exhibition demonstrates today, we are in a widespread correction for this under-known condition, led by institutions, curators, and scholars who have sought to reframe historical narratives with greater inclusion of both subjects and subject matter. For Tompkins this new crack in the old armor offers a chance to revisit her lifetime of work.

CONJURIN'

During a 2012 lecture at the Seattle Metals Guild, Tompkins shifted between images of her narrative jewelry, baby photos of her boys, and faded snapshots of things that made her chuckle, like a beauty salon named "hairgasm." She explains, "I love people with their foibles and victories. I love to celebrate being in the boat together. The ridiculous and the sublime way we behave and interact with each other and with our sweet old world."[7]

While some artists build a strict separation between their art and their life, Tompkins's work is born from it: friendships, family, romances, motherhood, moments she picked up along the way were all fodder for her work. "Conjurin'" was what she often called this virtuous circle of creation, so named by her friend and fellow artist Ed Wiklander.[8] "I always conjure with care," she said in 2012.[9]

The seeds of this conjurin' were planted early. Her parents were both schoolteachers, but her father's off-hours tinkering and collections of doodads and trinkets became her childhood preoccupation. Tompkins often recalled her delight at sending her beat-up and beloved found objects back out into the world, embedded within her work. *Dad's Paydays* (1968) is an early example: an assemblage pendant with her dad's tiny portrait set against a sterling silver cast of his denim overalls (worn daily), a dangling Roosevelt pin, a swatch of fabric, and a metal rivet stamped *never wears out*, a dual comment on material and memory.

This assembled portrait speaks to the profound influence of her brother Don, fourteen years her senior and a vital source of artistic guidance. In 1966 Tompkins spent a year at the University of Washington in Seattle before following Don to the jewelry and metalsmithing department at CWU. Don had just been recruited by Ramona Solberg, a central figure in the development of found object jewelry in the Pacific Northwest. But just as Tompkins arrived in 1967, Solberg departed for the University of Washington. Tompkins became Don's student for two years, but she didn't graduate, instead returning to Seattle

Wild Oats Sowing Kit, 1971
Sterling silver, Plexiglas, yen, birth control pills
3 x 3 x ⅜ in.
Courtesy American Craft Council Library & Archives

Slow Boat (Portrait of Ken Cory), 1976
Sterling silver, enamels, wood, brass, copper, found objects
5½ x 4½ x ⅝ in.
Photo: Lynn Thompson
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: Helen Williams Drutt Collection, Promised Gift

That Night, 1997
Sterling silver, copper, brass, found objects
Each dress: 2½ x 1½ x ¼ in.
Photo: Rex Rystedt
Courtesy of the Estate of Merrily Tompkins

in 1969 and showing with the Funk-leaning Manolides Gallery soon after. However, after studying with Don, the underpinnings of her work had taken form.

"The most valuable lesson I learned from him is not to be intimidated by technique," Tompkins wrote of Don in *My Bro + Me*, a short remembrance. "He said the hardest thing is to figure out what you want to do … once you know—once you have a vision, the rest can be dealt with."[10] In many ways her vision intersected with Don's, whose works drew from personal effects to offer acute social commentary. His "Commemorative Medals" series featured assemblage pendant portraits of figures like Janis Joplin and Richard Nixon.

Tompkins's *Wild Oats Sowing Kit* (1971) can be viewed through a similar lens. It was included in the Museum of Contemporary Crafts's 1973 exhibition *Portable World*, which investigated objects that addressed nomadic, flexible lifestyles. *Wild Oats Sowing Kit* was among them, a Dialpak tablet dispenser of birth control pills as its pendant. A Chinese yen coin served as a kind of stopper, which could be removed in order to rotate and release a pill. An obvious play on the woman's sewing kit, it also owes a formal kinship to the circle pin, a symbol of 1950s and '60s "good-girl" femininity. Worn as a sign of "getting pinned" or going steady, Tompkins's circle offered the polar opposite, the freedom to *sow wild oats*, with its stamped directive telegraphing its message. Free love and feminist commentary are at work, but so is the personal, with the artist's own playful expression of sexuality on view.

As Tompkins's jewelry evolved, portraiture took on a greater focus. If Don's "Commemorative Medals" gazed outward to the cultural and political landscape around him, she had only to look around the corner, drawing from personal relationships close to home. By the mid-1970s, one of the closest was with fellow jeweler Ken Cory, who had replaced her brother on the CWU faculty in 1972 when Don left for his Ph.D. at Columbia University and teaching at New York University.

Cory, then a newly minted MFA from Washington State University in Pullman, had spent his undergraduate years attending the California College of Arts and Crafts (today California College of the Arts). Keith Lewis, who now holds Cory's and Tompkins's storied post at CWU, describes Cory as "one of the three or four best American art jewelers of the last century."[11] Lewis refers to the "house style" developed between their tightly knit group, which included artist Les LePere, Cory's partner in the Pencil Brothers, and their shared "iconic dark contour lines, bright colors, and scenarios of chance moments," told in cartoonlike narrative jewelry and wall works.[12]

The friends had nicknames for one another: Tompkins was Blanche Dowdy, LePere was Lead Pencil, and Cory was Red Pencil. Tompkins used a red pencil as the kinetic pull for *Slow Boat (Portrait of Ken Cory)*, from 1976.[13] Tug it and Cory rows down the river, his long-haired likeness replete with a headband. His silver boat floats on an enamel river, like the Columbia,

"I love people with their foibles and victories. I love to celebrate being in the boat together.

The ridiculous and the sublime way we behave and interact with each other and with our sweet old world."

Portrait of Nikola Tesla, 1982
Restored and renamed
Big Tesla, 2002
Ceramic tile on concrete
with metal substructure
4 x 4 x 3½ ft
Seattle Arts Commission
1% for Art funds, project for
Seattle City Light electrical
substation (later relocated)
Photo courtesy of the Estate
of Merrily Tompkins

where the pair would often canoe. A secret language of references and inside jokes is tucked into the scene, and as on many of her works, a back panel opens to reveal its interior mechanisms, a fitting metaphor. The enamel itself is an ode to Cory's favored material. It is a physical expression of their entwined relationship, which would come to take many forms: lovers for a time, friends and artistic compatriots, always. "In a way," Tompkins said, "he kind of introduced me to myself."[14]

As her career progressed, Tompkins moved between the intimacy and engineering of jewelry and larger-scale sculptural works like *Portrait of Nikola Tesla*, which highlighted her humor and sideways thinking in the public arena. The four-foot-tall ceramic mosaic bust of electrical pioneer Nikola Tesla was completed in 1982 as part of a public art commission with Clair Colquitt and Ries Niemi for Seattle City Light's Creston-Nelson substation. Restored and relocated in 2002—and renamed *Big Tesla*—his head doubles as a jardinière, with plants and flowers growing as his hair.

Large-scale work extended into wall pieces and sculpture, and during the busy days of motherhood when her art production slowed, Tompkins's home in Seattle became an extension of her creative universe. She retrofitted a pounded copper sink into the kitchen of their small Craftsman-style house, and as her former husband John Keister recalls, he once returned home from his job as a local television host to find the entire house painted bright blue with salmon-pink shutters.[15]

In 1997 when the couple amicably separated, Tompkins moved with her three boys into Cory's former house in Ellensburg, which she had acquired after his death. She chose the locale, winding away from Seattle through the Cascade Range, as much for its cowboys and hay as for its university. Tompkins returned to a quieter life filled with regular folk.

Tompkins's oeuvre has yet to fully coalesce: it exists in disparate collections and archives, in the memories of family and friends, and the vast trove of material left in her home.

Susan Cummins, who, with Damian Skinner and Cindi Strauss is at work on a book about the intersection of counterculture and American art jewelry in the 1960s and '70s, points to Funk and folk influences within Tompkins's work. She notes folk's dual meanings, seen not only in the artist's aesthetic kinship with its traditions—including kinetics like whirly gigs and automatons—but also cites the jeweler's democratic championing of "regular folk."[16] Tompkins herself explained her love of folk traditions "made ingeniously, out of whatever stuff those folks have at hand, much the way my father and my farmer/rancher uncles operated..."[17] *Kin*, a necklace from 2005, speaks to these ideas with its carved stick faces, recalling whittling and scrimshaw.

Kin, 2005
Colored pencil, carved sticks, coral, sterling silver, ostrich egg, shells, found objects, mirror 'bead'
Height 3 in.
Courtesy of the Estate of Merrily Tompkins

When Merrily Tompkins first began talking to Ken Cory, she "could tell it was only the tip of the iceberg of what he was thinking."[18] Researching Tompkins has been much the same experience: each piece of her work conjures all the layers of history that exist beneath.

Tompkins's oeuvre has yet to fully coalesce: it exists in disparate collections and archives, in the memories of family and friends, and the vast trove of material left in her home. Helen Drutt, close to Tompkins for decades, knew these all to be generative forces behind her work: "It came from her life, things she saw, films she went to, dances she did, her parents, her relatives—it came from everything that she absorbed into her universe."[19] In this precipitous moment between two definitive art-historical states—the present of a working artist and the past of a legacy—sits Tompkins's life and work, deserving of further recognition.

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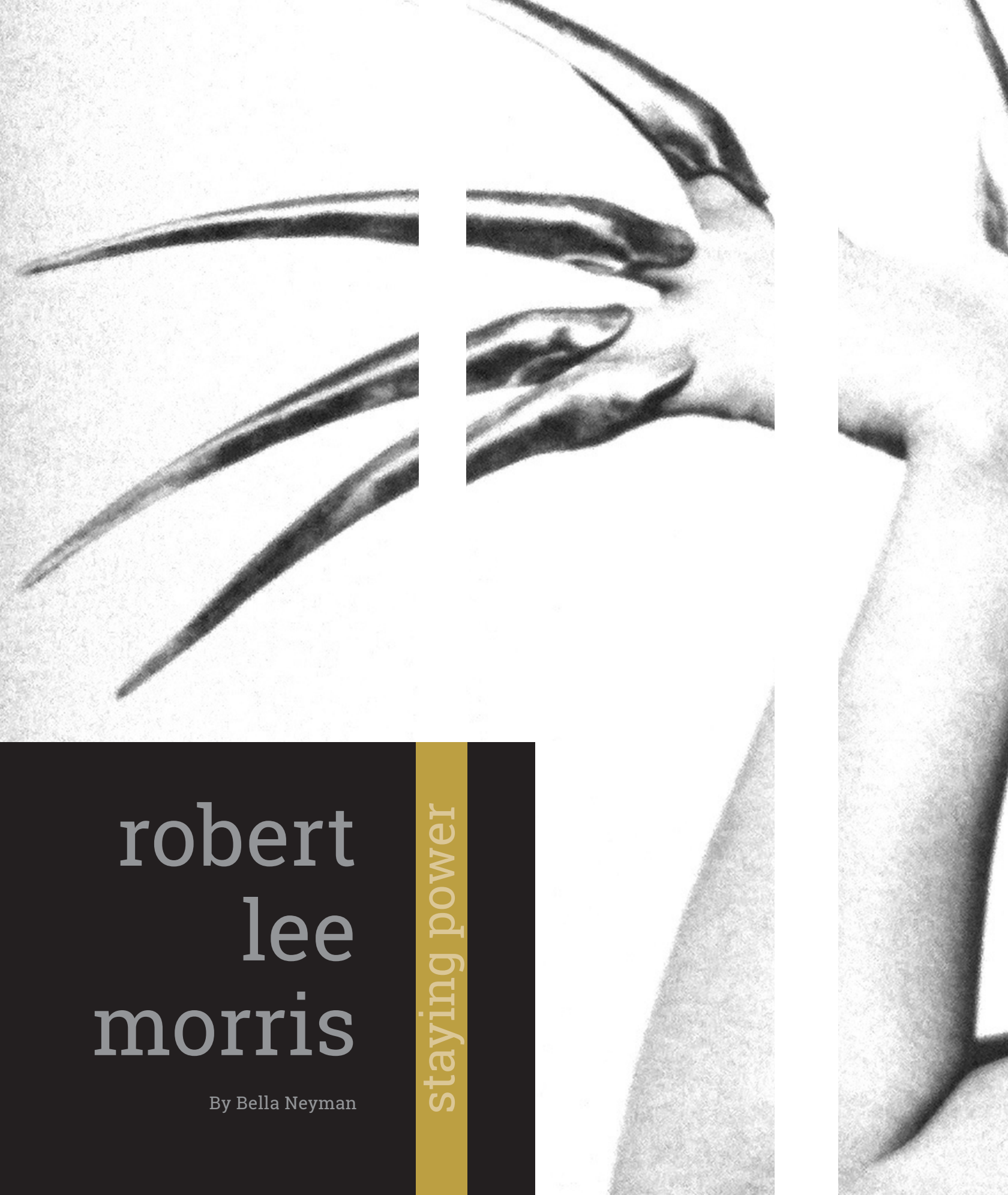
1 The author wishes to thank Susan Cummins and Keith Lewis for generously sharing their knowledge and archival records on Tompkins and Helen Drutt for making her memories and archives on the artist an open book. / **2** See Peter Selz, *Funk* (University of California, Berkeley, 1967), the landmark exhibition and catalogue that introduced the Funk Art movement. / **3** See Matthew Kangas, "Ellensburg Funky," *Metalsmith*, vol. 15, no. 4 (Fall 1995), 14-21, with Ken Cory, Nancy Worden, Ed Wicklander, Don Tompkins, and Merrily Tompkins profiled. / **4** Merrily Tompkins, Archive of Helen Williams Drutt English, Philadelphia, PA. / **5** Ben Mitchell, "Merrily Tomkins: Over Yonder," *Metalsmith*, vol. 26, no. 5 (Winter, 2006), 42. / **6** See Cindi Strauss, *Ornament as Art: Avant Garde Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Arnoldsche Art Publishers (Houston and Stuttgart, 2007), and Rosie Chambers Mills and Bobbye Tigerman, *Beyond Bling: Contemporary Jewelry from the Lois Boardman Collection*, LACMA / DelMonico Prestel (Los Angeles, and New York, 2016). / **7** Merrily Tompkins, "Let it Ride," Lecture, Seattle Metals Guild, October 20, 2012, Seattle, WA. / **8** Merrily Tompkins, artist statement, n.d., Archive of Helen Drutt, Philadelphia, PA; Merrily Tompkins, unpublished email to author Ben Mitchell, 4.16.06. / **9** Merrily Tompkins, "Let it Ride," October 20, 2012. / **10** Merrily Tompkins, "My Bro + Me," n.d., Archive of Helen Drutt, Philadelphia, PA / **11** Keith Lewis, telephone interview with the author, 7.15.19. / **12** Ibid. / **13** Les LePere, conversation with the author, 9.5.19. LePere is known for his illustrations including book covers for Tom Robbins's *Still Life with Woodpecker* and *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*. / **14** Merrily Tompkins as quoted in Ben Mitchell, *The Jewelry of Ken Cory: Play Disguised* (Tacoma, WA: Tacoma Art Museum, 1997), 64. / **15** Jon Keister, telephone interview and email with the author, 8.5.19; 10.2.19. **16** Susan Cummins, telephone interview with the author, 8.26.19. / **17** Merrily Tompkins, unpublished email to author Ben Mitchell, 4.16.06. / **18** Merrily Tompkins as quoted in Ben Mitchell, *The Jewelry of Ken Cory: Play Disguised*, 64. / **19** Helen Drutt, interview with the author, Philadelphia, PA, 9.6.19.



robert lee morris

By Bella Neyman

staying power

Above and right:

Crowds at the opening of Artwear's Spirit Show, 1984

Photo: Tony Palmieri for *Women's Wear Daily*

Robert Lee Morris's career path would be the dream of many young jewelers. Over his fifty-year career he has successfully navigated the worlds of art jewelry and commercial fashion jewelry. He began as a studio artist, making one-of-a-kind pieces, but then at one point supervised eighteen collections of production pieces a year. Throughout the course of his career, Morris has appeared in this magazine numerous times (including features in 1984, 1987, and 1993), and gave the keynote address at the SNAG conference in Atlanta in 1991.

But Morris's notoriety extends far beyond the pages of *Metalsmith*. He landed his first *Vogue* cover in 1976, and then appeared in the magazine forty-nine consecutive times over the course of seven years. Morris has received two Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Awards for Accessory Design (1985 and 1994), a Coty Award in 1981, and was the first jeweler awarded the Geoffrey Beene Lifetime Achievement Award from the CFDA in 2007. Morris is a crossover artist who feels as comfortable behind a jeweler's bench at Penland School of Crafts (one of his all-time favorite places) as he does backstage at a couture runway show styling the models. Now seventy-two, Morris is focused on creating a secondary market for his work. As usual, he is ahead of his time, always thinking about what's next.

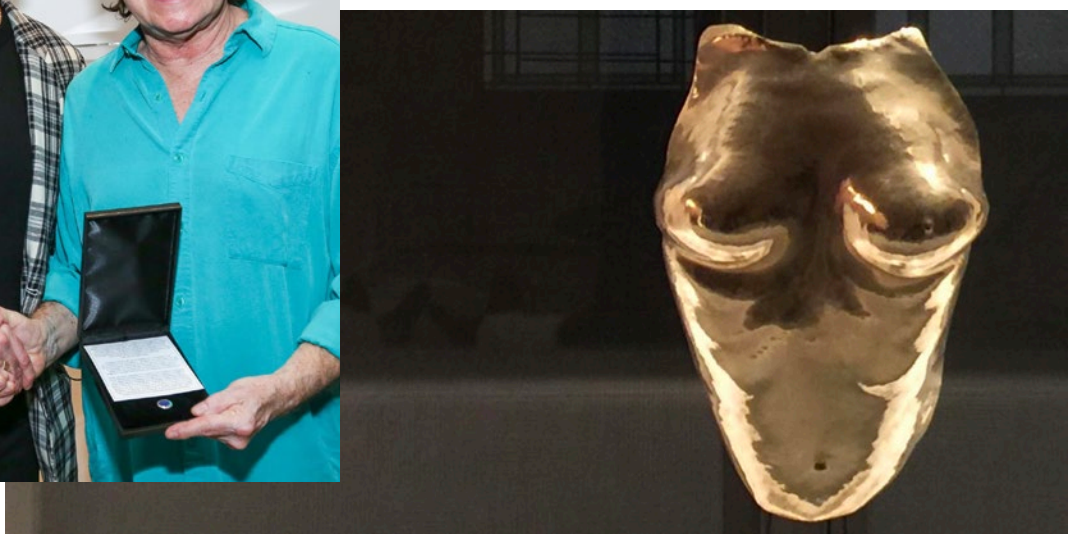
Morris's story is born of the grit and energy of 1970s New York: a time and place when, if you had a clear sense of who you were, dreamed big, and busted your back, you could end up hanging out with Liza Minnelli, Andy Warhol, and Halston at Studio 54. In Morris's case, his circle included Donna Karan, Calvin Klein, and Roy Lichtenstein.

Previous spread:

Talons Claws, 1988
Sterling silver
Model: Aly Dunne
Photo: Matthew Royston

Robert Lee Morris (right) with Jonathan Wahl, Director, 92nd Street Y Jewelry Center. Morris was an honoree at the 2017 92Y Jewelry Center Benefit.

Photo: Michael Priest Photography



Breast plate, 1981
Brass
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

Helix Collar, 1978
Brass and copper, linen cord
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

An Air Force brat, Morris was well-traveled, cultured, and had an understanding of business from a young age. His memoir/coffee-table book, *Robert Lee Morris: The Power of Jewelry* (Abrams, 2004), details his youthful adventures with wit and charm. Morris attended Beloit College in Wisconsin where he studied filmmaking, but it took some time for him to realize his true calling. His sculpture professor, George Garner, in addition to many artistic pursuits, was a jeweler, and an early mentor. Watching Garner work inspired Morris to try his hand at jewelrymaking. After graduation Morris found himself living in a commune with some of his old classmates, and he decided to "express [himself] through this medium, which was more commercially appealing than sculpture or painting."[1] With Thomas Gentille's book *How to Make Jewelry* at his workbench, Morris taught himself exactly that. As the commune had no electricity, he focused on cold construction, mastering basic techniques such as wire work, forging, and drilling holes with a hand-powered rotary drill. "I didn't start out liking jewelry. I liked good design …," he recalls. "Early on, I'd play in my grandmother's jewelry box, and 'magical little objects' left an impression on me. Throughout my life, I never had an interest in jewelry but anthropology and art—only tribal, ethnic jewelry resonated with me due to their mores of land and culture. In the back of my mind, I wanted to replace all the glittery department store stuff and make something with great design, with prices that people could afford, and I materialized this."[2]

Morris's first retail experiences came from selling at local craft fairs. In 1972, at the Crafts Fair at the Putney School in Vermont, Morris caught the attention of an employee of Parker Street 470, the esteemed Boston gallery owned by Joan Sonnabend and Phyllis Rosen. The two art-world doyennes were embarking on a new venture called Sculpture to Wear in New York City's Plaza Hotel.[3] Sculpture to Wear was the first gallery to sell jewelry by well-known artists like Picasso, Braque, Calder, Ernst, Nevelson, and Lichtenstein. Morris's work felt right at home there and sold well. Morris wasn't the type of artist to leave his merchandise and go back to the studio. After settling in SoHo in 1974, he became a permanent fixture at the gallery, working closely with the clients and getting to know their wants and needs. "The clientele at Sculpture to Wear ranged from celebrities to art collectors," says Morris. "My things had a presence and all looked like gold, but they weren't, so they were easy to buy. Women started to come in to buy pieces to mix with their existing jewels. I was certainly encouraged by working with this level of fashionable client. And the fact that they collected Max Ernst made me respect what I was doing even more."[4]

Pebble Cluster Necklace, 1989
Pebble collection for
Donna Karan, 1989 Fall
Photo: Carl Scheffel

"In the back of my mind, I wanted to replace all the glittery department store stuff and make something with great design, with prices that people could afford, and I materialized this."

Earrings
Gold-plated brass
Various dimensions
Photo: Carl Scheffel

Morris's move to New York had a profound effect on his work. His "classic" look was inspired by the "ultra-clean, pure sculptural style of the Cycladic figures" he saw at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He created his signature look in 1974 by experimenting with sheet, wire, and a sandbag, resulting in a form that was smooth and voluminous. Morris likened it to "what pizza dough might look like when it was made into a flat pie shape and tossed in the air, curving and floating like a piece of cloth."[5] This shape could be easily manipulated into many different forms, from rings to pendants, bracelets, belt buckles, and even masks. This same form catapulted Morris to fame. "What I did that differentiated me from anyone else on the market were my patinas," he says. "I colored the metal to make it look like it was dug up from an archeological site. Every time I came up with a new color range, the fashion editors would grab the pieces and shoot them. This editorial coverage kept us in the eye of the public."[6]

Sculpture to Wear closed in 1977, and Morris was at a crossroads. "Not one store or art gallery…had a clue what to do with my work," he recalls. "It wasn't really jewelry and it wasn't really art, they said. …Since it wasn't made of gold and precious materials it couldn't go into their fine jewelry departments, and it was too expensive for their costume jewelry departments. I was making something that didn't fit into the existing marketplace."[7] Morris decided that the only way to survive was to create an outlet for himself and artists like him. In September 1977 he opened Artwear, first located on Madison and 74th Street, then on West Broadway in SoHo. Inspired by the galleries at the Met, the work was displayed on life-size nude plaster body casts. Artwear proved to be groundbreaking. Says Morris, "We must have had close to 3,000 people walk through our doors the first weekend we opened, and raked in over $10,000 in sales."[8] A famous photo from *Women's Wear Daily* captures the mob scene outside Artwear at the opening of the "Spirit" show in 1984.

Artwear's first group of artists included Cara Croninger, Ted Muehling, Patricia Von Musulin, Thomas Gentille, and Arline Fisch. The store went

Delta Cuff, 1978
Brass with green patina
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

Left:
Art Nouveau Pendant, 1976
Sterling silver
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

Below:
Turbofan Collar, 1977
Brass, copper silver
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

on to feature numerous others, including Joyce J. Scott, Tone Vigeland, John Iverson, Miyé Matsukata, Laurence de Vries, Bob Ebendorf, and Jamie Bennett. For some of the artists, it was the first time that their work was retailed in New York, if not the United States. Morris believed in this work and wanted to educate his audience about jewelry that had artistic merit. He spent a lot of time researching artists from around the country; many were his peers. Once the gallery opened, artists would come to visit and present their work to him on a regular basis. Although Artwear changed locations several times, it remained a New York landmark, with numerous celebrity clients, including Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jackson, Bianca Jagger, Elton John, Brooke Shields, and Sandra Bullock. After sixteen years, Artwear closed in 1993.

Morris has always been a visionary and a believer. In a 1984 *Metalsmith* article by Vanessa Lynn titled "Robert Lee Morris: The Business of Marketing Art Jewelry," Morris said, "There just have to be more art jewelry galleries opening. If they are not opened by artists themselves, as cooperatives or private enterprises, they will be by wealthy individuals who realize that they can make a profit… I'm a good role model. People could just come here and see how I operate. All they have to do is the same thing, and they would be successful."[9]

Transitioning from an artist-jeweler making one-of-a-kind pieces to creating production lines for fashion icons like Geoffrey Beene, Calvin Klein, Kansai Yamamoto, and Donna Karan was not easy. Morris's breakthrough was in 1979, when Beene asked him to make jewelry for his fall collection, which created major buzz and demand for his work. Morris recalls working almost twenty-four hours a day: taking meetings on Seventh Avenue with the designers until 5 p.m., then running back to his studio to sketch the pieces, then hopping in a cab around 3:30 a.m. to show the new designs. At one point he was creating eighteen collections a year, which included jewelry designs under his own name, collections for Donna Karan, and accessory lines that included scarves, handbags, small leather goods, and men's jewelry. "What I was doing with these designers was a real breakthrough," he says. "Donna sold the jewelry that went down the runway"—unlike other famous jewelry collaborations, like those between Halston and Elsa Peretti, for example, that were not as financially lucrative for the jeweler.[10] "Designers always wanted what's next, and artists need to be constantly reinventing themselves, but reinvention comes when you can visualize. If you don't visualize, then you can't materialize."[11]

"Designers always wanted what's next, and artists need to be constantly reinventing themselves, but reinvention comes when you can visualize. If you don't visualize, then you can't materialize."

"Materializing" the work became an all-encompassing endeavor, and Morris could no longer keep making his pieces by hand. Being in NYC was critical. "We had almost overnight service at Billanti Casting on 47th Street because we did such big business," he remembers. "I realized that I couldn't keep making pieces by hand every time I needed them. We cast with them in brass, silver, and in gold, and then we would bring the castings back to the studio, clean them up, get them ready, put them in huge tumblers, and create soft matte surfaces. We would then take them right to Simon Platers, which was located just a block from our casting company....Simon created for me the signature 24k matte-gold look that was not garish and just the right color, and looked like pure gold. Just yummy."

Patricia Madeja, Professor and Jewelry Coordinator at Pratt Institute's Fine Arts Program, worked at Morris's Crosby Street studio straight out of college from 1985 to 1989, and became his design assistant. Madeja recalls, "The company grew so fast at that time, and we were all figuring it out together. It felt like every few months Robert was taking over another floor in the loft building. ... Eventually Robert gave up his living space to create his own personal studio space. I remember the tumbler in the bathtub and the kitchen converted to a wet area and finishing space, but the 'design' studio was imbued with Robert's signature touch."[12]

Over the past decade, Morris's business has undergone many transformations, from new owners to QVC to Robert Lee Morris SOHO. The company is now owned by Centric Brands.

These days, Morris is focused on his legacy. He constantly hears from his clients that they could "open their own RLM boutiques" given how much of his work they've collected, and sometimes they even consign it to auction.

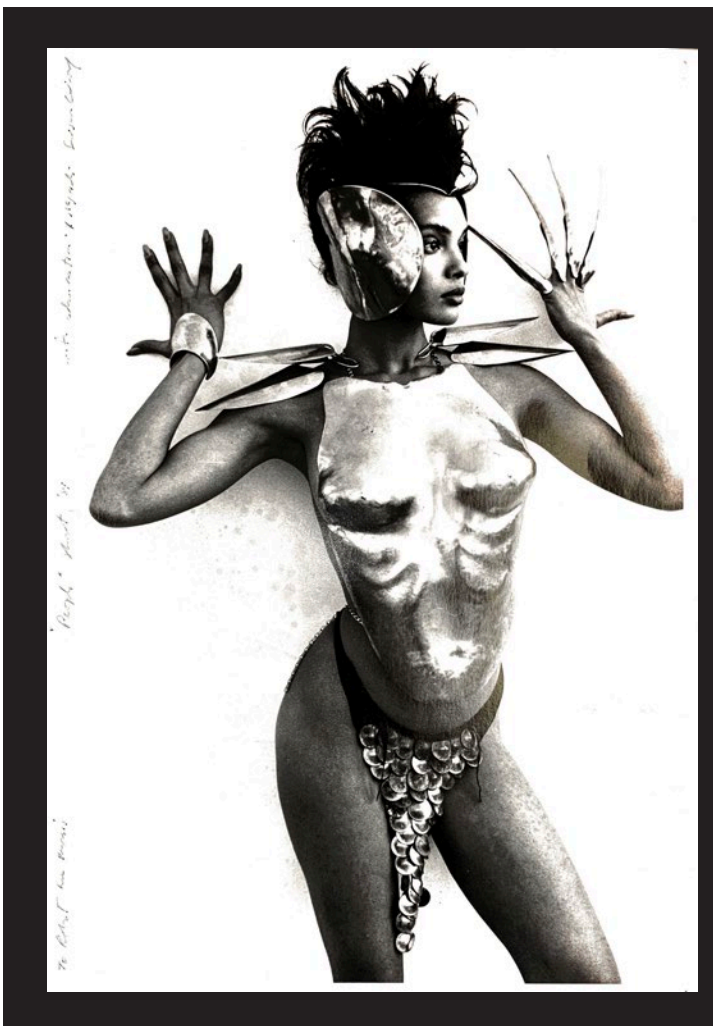
Colossal Buckle Bracelet, 1987
Sterling silver
Photo: Robert Lee Morris

After noticing that his work has appreciated in value on the secondary market, he is looking to preserve his place in history through that avenue. In February 2020, Bonhams New York hosted an exhibition, *Fifty Year Anniversary of the Fashion Jewelry of Robert Lee Morris,* and an auction of 300 pieces spanning the years 1970 to 2020. As at every step in his career, Morris is breaking new ground.

Of his place in jewelry history, Morris says, "I became the guy who opened the door for jewelry designers who had unique iconic artistic signatures, something very different from the traditional fine jewelry market." While Morris is certainly the person who made it possible for other jewelers to get recognition, his own career has had unparalleled staying power. Mia Habib, Vice President of Jewelry Design at Centric Brands and owner of Oblik Atelier, has been working with Morris for the last five years, and says:

> "Robert made "wearable sculpture" a commercial term without sacrificing the art, the muse, and his artistic expression. He did not walk away from "handmade" while building his epic body of work. His knowledge of history, art history, as well as his keen desire to stay on the pulse of technology is why his work still connects with people; he is always evolving, investigating and staying curious. ... I think that his work and his signature is unique and it remains relevant today, and that is the testament to the true artist whose work surpasses the stamp of time."[13]

Bella Neyman is an independent curator and journalist specializing in contemporary jewelry. She is the co-founder, along with JB Jones, of New York City Jewelry Week. Her work has been published in the New York Times, American Craft, *and* Modern *magazine.*



Warrior, *People* magazine, May 11, 1987
Photo: Susan Wood

1 Robert Lee Morris, *Robert Lee Morris: The Power of Jewelry* (New York: Harry N. Abrams), 2004; 32. / **2** Interview with the author, September 5, 2019. / **3** Joan was married to Roger Sonnabend of the Sonesta Corporation who owned the hotel; it was his wife's idea that art should be prominently displayed in all of his hotels. / **4** Interview with the author, September 5, 2019. / **5** Morris, 39. / **6** Interview with the author, September 5, 2019. / **7** Morris, 32./ **8** Ibid. / **9** Vanessa Lynn, "Robert Lee Morris: The Business of Marketing Art Jewelry," *Metalsmith*, Summer, 1994, 31. / **10** Interview with the author, September 5, 2019. / **11** Ibid. / **12** Email exchange with the author, September 25, 2019. / **13** Email exchange with the author, September 22, 2019.

Mary Ann Scherr's

ALL IS POSSIBLE

Legacy in Metal

By Ana Estrades

Mary Ann Scherr's sixty-year career in metal design and education brought her fame nationally and internationally. Her accomplishments as a maker include pioneering biomedical jewelry, innovative metal-etching techniques, and pushing the boundaries of new materials, such as stainless steel and titanium.

In her career as an educator, Scherr was Associate Professor and Director of Metal Graduate Studies at Kent State University in the 1970s, followed in the 1980s by a position as Chair of the Crafts Department at Parsons School of Design in New York. After she moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1989, Scherr taught at the Penland School of Crafts for more than four decades, as well as Duke University, Meredith College, and North Carolina State University.

In spite of her success, the scope of Scherr's contributions to the field have yet to be critically examined, partly because her boundless energy, creativity, and career continued until age ninety-four. In particular, there is a lack of secondary interpretation of her thirty-year career in Raleigh, where she continued to teach, experiment in metals and biomedical jewelry, and work on jewelry commissions until her death in 2016. The last publicly available documentation of Scherr's career is her 2001 oral history in the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The years in Raleigh are for the most part unpublished and kept in family records and her personal archive, with her jewelry dispersed in private collections. In exploring the highlights of Scherr's career, her works held in private collections, and examining her role as a teacher and mentor through interviews with former studio assistants in North Carolina, it is possible to fully appreciate Scherr's creative energy and her legacy in the field.[1]

Scherr was born in Akron, Ohio, in 1921. She studied graphic design and illustration for two years at the Cleveland Institute of Art,[2] and during World War II she worked as a cartographer and illustrator for the Goodyear Aircraft Corporation in Akron, followed by a year as a graphic designer with the Burton Browne Advertising Agency in Chicago.[3] At the time she was dating Sam Scherr, a fellow student from the Cleveland Institute, who was working at General Motors.[4] In 1945 Sam told Mary Ann (neé Weckman) that Ford Motor Company in Detroit was interviewing designers, so she applied, and was hired as one of the first female automobile designers.[5] The couple married in 1947 and moved to Akron, where they opened Scherr & McDermott International—an industrial, product and graphic design firm—with industrial designer Bernard McDermott, a fellow student from the Cleveland

Mary Ann Scherr at Ford Motor Company Styling Center, 1946

Courtesy of the Scherr Family

Previous spread:

Mary Ann Scherr at Artspace, Raleigh, 1990

Photo: Doug Van de Zande
Courtesy of the Scherr Family

Mary Ann Scherr
Dr. Steven Kanor
No-Nod Alarm, 1981
Sterling silver, bronze, electronics
1⅜ x 1½ x ½ in.
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Collection of Scott Scherr
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

Trach cover necklace, 1970s
Sterling silver and gold
10¾ x 3 in.
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Collection of Scott Scherr
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

All is Possible cuff, 1990s
Sterling silver
3 x 6 x ¾ in.
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

Institute. Scherr's first designs for the firm were children's books, business logos, toys, and homewares. It was not until after the birth of the couple's first child, Randy, in 1949 that she discovered her passion for metal in evening classes at the Akron Art Institute and Museum.[6] Randy later claimed, "She started making jewelry because she was bored being pregnant."[7] According to Scherr, she fell in love with metals after the first class: "I was totally hooked. I felt comfortable with this material and immediately envisioned all kinds of directions for myself."[8]

In the 1950s, at a time when the craft movement was beginning to pervade academia, Scherr began teaching product design at Kent State University. In her unpublished memoir, she explains that though she was selected to teach metals, she had only taken a couple of evening workshops. "Elmer Novotny, then Chair of the Art Department, advised that I should be one chapter ahead of my students,"[9] she recalls. The dearth of books on metalsmithing, paired with her minimal training, meant that both her studio work and teaching career required quite a bit of experimentation and innovation.

From the beginning, Scherr's teaching influenced her work in the studio, and vice versa, especially as she stretched the boundaries of jewelry. For example, Scherr designed her first "cosmetic cover-up" in 1968 while teaching metals at Penland. One of her students had undergone a tracheotomy, and Scherr offered to make her a beautiful piece of jewelry to cover the incision.[10] Scherr went on to collaborate with scientists and engineers to design body monitors, jewel-like devices that read the heart rate, pulse, and air pollution.[11] By 1969 she had created a prototype of a heart pulse monitor cuff, the equivalent to today's Apple Watch® or Fitbit®. Though Scherr gifted her complete collection of body monitor prototypes to the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City, the Scherr family in Raleigh kept the prototypes of the

By 1969 she had created a prototype of a heart pulse monitor cuff, the equivalent to today's Apple Watch or Fitbit.

Grapes neckpiece, ca. 1980
Titanium
9 x 7 in.
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

Oxygen Mask Pendant and the *No-Nod Alarm*, another form of body monitor Scherr co-developed in 1981 with a New York–based bioengineer.[12] Elegantly etched and no larger than a silver dollar, the *No-Nod Alarm* has an on/off switch, and a clip to attach the device to one's glasses while driving. If the driver began to nod off, the alarm emitted a loud sound. Unfortunately, while the body monitors received publicity and worldwide recognition, they were never mass produced, due to the high cost and need for further development in microcircuitry systems.

By the time the Scherrs moved to New York City in the late 1970s, Mary Ann was at the peak of her jewelry career. In addition to her body monitors, she experimented with unusual metals, notably titanium. In 1982, Scherr produced a pioneering collection of anodized titanium and niobium jewelry, which was exhibited with great success at the International Boutique Festival on Central Park West. However, cheaper knockoffs of her designs soon flooded the market, so she stopped production.[13]

From 1979 to 1989, Scherr was busy heading the new Crafts department at Parsons.[14] By 1986 she had officially changed the name of the department to "Product Design in Media."[15] As a result of Scherr's experiences in the industry, patenting biomedical jewelry, and producing and marketing jewelry collections, Parsons became the first design institution in the country to offer courses on copyright, and design for production.[16]

As Sam's health declined, Scherr resigned from Parsons in 1989 to move to North Carolina, where the couple reunited with their three children who were living in Raleigh. At age sixty-eight, Scherr was still full of creative energy and passion for metals. She continued to work in her studio, and taught at Duke, Meredith, and NC State. Her longest teaching relationship was in the mountains north of Asheville, at Penland, where she taught for more than forty years. Her children also spent their summers in Penland: Scherr's daughter Sydney, who followed in her footsteps as goldsmith and educator, learned to be an enamellist and a fine goldsmith there. Scherr even claimed, "Penland is my second home!" in a note accompanying her annual contribution to Penland's 2009 Benefit Auction.[17] The feeling was mutual, as Penland honored her as Outstanding Artist Educator in 2008.[18]

In her oral history, Scherr stated, "At Penland, I learned to know, meet, and watch woodworkers, ceramics people, book artists, textile designers, photographers, and metalsmiths. I enjoyed learning about each area from the finest people in their fields."[19] A spectacular neckpiece resulting from Penland's collaborative spirit is now in a private collection in Raleigh, along with its original drawing. The matching earrings are in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

In 2000, Mary Ann and her daughter Sydney worked together on the Meredith College *President's Medallion*, an official academic commission for Meredith's first woman president, Maureen Hartford. At the time, mother and daughter were

Scott Scherr's Signature Ring, 1991
Sterling silver, 14k gold
20.6 mm
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Collection of Scott Scherr
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

Mary Ann Scherr, designer
Sissy Marshall, fabricator
ESM Ring, 1990s
14k gold, sterling silver
19 x 20 mm outside diameter
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

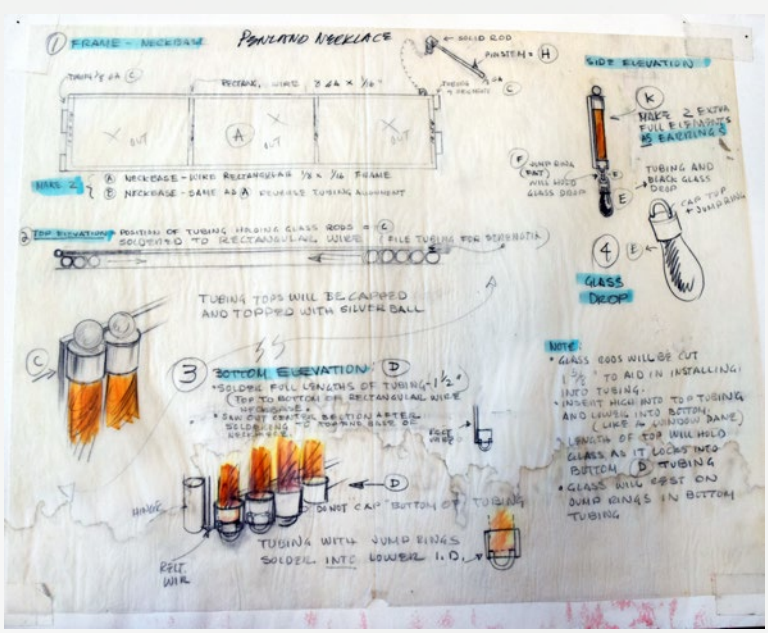
Mary Ann Sherr's personal rings
Shield ring with initals M.A.S.: 16.4 mm
Band: 18 mm
Sterling silver, 14k gold
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Private collection
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

"From what I'm beginning to understand about metal, there's no end to the techniques that have come through civilizations and cultures. So as long as there's more to learn, I guess I'll be a metalsmith."

teaching in the art department at Meredith. Sydney—who completed graduate studies in fine arts from Southern Illinois University—shared her mother's passion for teaching, material experimentation and discovery. In the exhibition catalogue for "Relative Visions," one of the few shows of their work together, Sydney declared, "I've learned to get around limitations through personal investigation—going right to the material. I don't like to discover things secondhand. I think this comes from my mom, because I always thought my mom was too easy a research source for me to utilize, and I never asked her to answer my questions. I have spent as long as seven months trying to figure out just one aspect of the material."[20]

Scherr continued teaching well into her nineties. A photograph of her smiling next to a student was taken in 2012 during one of her most popular workshops, a titanium and niobium anodizing class at the Crafts Center at NC State.[21] Many of the tools and machines at the Crafts Center's metal studio are actually labeled "Scherr" or "Mary Ann"—for example, Scherr's bench vise and hydraulic press. In parallel to their exhibition on Scherr next spring and summer, titled *Legacy in Metal*, the Crafts Center is offering workshops on titanium coloring, cuff making, textured rings, and soldering techniques, taught by Scherr's former students and studio assistants Amy Veatch, Sarah Tector, and Suijin Li.[22]

Scherr's first studio assistant when she moved to Raleigh in 1989 was metalsmith Eleanor (Sissy) S. Marshall, now retired. Marshall also assisted Scherr at Penland over several summers in the 1990s to 2000s. She recalls how good Scherr was at mentoring students, and how she enjoyed


PENLAND NECKLACE
FRAME - NECKBAND
SOLID ROD
PIN STEM = H
SIDE ELEVATION
MAKE 2 EXTRA FULL ELEMENTS AS EARRINGS
TUBING AND BLACK GLASS DROP
CAP TOP OF JUMP RING
GLASS DROP
TUBING TOPS WILL BE CAPPED AND TOPPED WITH SILVER BALL
3 BOTTOM ELEVATION
NOTE:
GLASS RODS WILL BE CUT 1 1/2" TO AID IN INSTALLING INTO TUBING.
INSERT HIGH INTO TOP TUBING AND LOWER INTO BOTTOM (LIKE A WINDOW BANE)
LENGTH OF TOP WILL HOLD GLASS AS IT LOCKS INTO BOTTOM D TUBING
GLASS WILL REST ON JUMP RINGS IN BOTTOM TUBING
DO NOT CAP "BUTTON OF" TUBING
TUBING WITH JUMP RINGS SOLDER INTO LOWER I.D.
BELT WIRE

Penland Necklace, 1988
Sterling silver, hand-blown glass tubes, black beads
8 x 3 in.
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

Penland Necklace drawing, 1988
Colored pencils, ink, pencil, rendered on vellum paper, 14 x 26 in.

Courtesy of a private collection

Mary Ann Scherr
Sissy Marshall
President's Medallion, 2000
Sterling silver, 14k gold-plated, cloisonné enamel, garnets
17 x 2¾ in
Photo: Jason Dowdle
Collection of the Meredith College Archive
Courtesy of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design

her time in the classroom, stating, "She got energy from them. Even when we came back from Penland exhausted, she would be regenerated."[23] Marshall regularly joined Scherr on a retreat in Wildacres, North Carolina, for the Florida Society of Goldsmiths. At the end of the three-week intensive course, the teachers held a "show and tell" exhibiting the students' work. Marshall remembers the care with which Scherr displayed her students' work; it "put everyone else to shame."

In the studio together, Marshall brought her technical abilities and Scherr her creative force.[24] An example of the perfect marriage of their strengths is Marshall's signature ring. Designed by Scherr and hand-fabricated by Marshall, the ring features her initials ESM, astrological symbol, and numbers. A mainstay in Scherr's business, these "identity" rings were commissioned for weddings and other special occasions, featuring a combination of personalized symbols and characters.[25] As in Marshall's example, Scherr would sometimes design personalized rings for her assistants to make. "I think this was one reason Mary Ann never let the students do rings…it was too close to what was a signature of hers," Marshall says.

Around 1993, after completing Scherr's metal classes at NC State and Penland, Suijin Li became Mary Ann's studio apprentice for three years. Li says that Scherr was more active and excited among the students: "The studio was a different energy. When she was teaching, she was giving herself to everybody. She was always encouraging."[26] Li highlights how giving Scherr was, not only with her time and knowledge, but also with her tools and materials. She points to one of her apprenticeship projects as an example of Scherr's generosity and ingenuity: a reticulated silver choker with a moonstone that Scherr gave her to use. Every month Scherr challenged Li to work on a project that honed her techniques as an apprentice.

Evidence of Scherr's encouragement is the "All is possible" bracelet, with a star for the letter "o," a birthday present to Li. It is part of a collection Scherr made with different messages and similar typography. Others read "Love is knowing you" with a heart in the middle, and sassier ones like "Up yours," or "Hell Yes." Li understands "All is possible" as a life lesson from Scherr: "She never gave up." The message matches Scherr's zest for life, infinite energy, creativity and passion.[27] During a television interview, on the occasion of her nintieth birthday, Scherr said: "…a piece of metal is filled with possibilities. That's where I feel most comfortable!"[28]

Not surprisingly, Scherr's last request to Li before her death was to build a community of jewelers in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, in order to strengthen the status of jewelrymaking in the area, gather support and resources, and organize workshops and collaborative exhibits. To that end, Li and Sarah Tector—another former studio assistant and Raleigh jewelry artist—started the Facebook group "Metalsmith Artists Forum," which has grown to almost 100 members since 2016.

It is a complex task to define Mary Ann Scherr's legacy but the key lies in the intersection between her work and her commitment to teaching as a lifelong process of discovery and experimentation.[29] Scherr chose metals because it opened up endless possibilities. In conversation with historian Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, Scherr declared, "From what I'm beginning to understand about metal, there's no end to the techniques that have come through civilizations and cultures. So as long as there's more to learn, I guess I'll be a metalsmith." Thirty years later, in an unpublished interview from 2015, Scherr confirmed, "That's what keeps me alive: whole new ways of looking at something."[30]

It is clear from Scherr's oral histories, and recent interviews with her relatives, friends, collectors, fellow artists, assistants,

Laura Wyker and Mary Ann Scherr at a titanium coloring workshop, 2012

Courtesy of the NC State Crafts Center

It is a complex task to define Mary Ann Scherr's legacy but the key lies in the intersection between her work and her commitment to teaching as a lifelong process of discovery and experimentation.

and students that she enjoyed teaching as part of her experimentation process. Her legacy lives on in the sum of her jewelry, experiences, innovations, experimentation with materials and techniques, teachings, and the many people she influenced.

Ana Estrades is a jewelry curator, researcher, and educator, with an MA in decorative arts, material culture and design history from the Bard Graduate Center in New York City. She is currently guest curator of All is Possible: Mary Ann Scherr's Legacy in Metal *at the Gregg Museum of Art & Design, and adjunct faculty at Meredith College Art Department, both in Raleigh, NC.*

1 This article stems from my research for the exhibition *All is Possible: Mary Ann Scherr's Legacy in Metal*, from February 20 to September 1, 2020, at the Gregg Museum of Art & Design, NC State University in Raleigh. With support from the museum and involvement of the community in North Carolina, I've been researching Scherr's impact in both design and education, through examples of work in private collections locally, and also through interviews. / **2** Scherr studied for two years at the Cleveland Institute of Art in Ohio. Mary Ann Scherr, interview by Mary Douglas, 6 and 7 April 2001, transcript, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. / **3** During World War II Scherr left school to work full time at Goodyear Aircraft from 1942-1944, making graphic war propaganda posters. Id., AAA. / **4** Scherr's unpublished memoir, 43. / **5** Id., 21. / **6** Marthe Le Van, *The Penland Book of Jewelry* (New York: Lark Books, 2005), 193. / **7** Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel. *Handmade in America: Conversations with Fourteen Craftmasters* (New York: Abrams, 1983), 197. / **8** In conversation with her best friend Patsy in 2014, quoted in Jean McLaughlin, Patsy G. Hopfenberg, and Sydney Scherr. "Mary Ann Scherr: (1921-2016)." *Metalsmith* 36 (5, 2016), 62. / **9** Scherr's unpublished memoir, 151. / **10** AAA. Oral history interview with Mary Ann Scherr, 2001. / **11** As Associate Professor of Metals at Kent State University, Ohio, Scherr collaborated with the consortium Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine and Dr. George Malindzak, Jr. "Personal monitor cosmetology. An aesthetic approach." Proceedings of the Symposium on the Development and Usage of Personal Monitors for Exposure and Health Effect Studies. Washington (DC): Environmental Protection Agency; 1979. / **12** Scot Scherr Collection, Raleigh. No-Nod was co-developed with NYC bioengineer Dr Steven Kanor. Linda Marx. *People Weekly* (November 1981): 120. / **13** Scherr was a trendsetter. Titanium came to the fore as a new wonder metal after WWII, successor to aluminum. She also pioneered the use of stainless steel and aluminum in jewelry as early as 1962 and 1974 respectively. AAA, Oral history interview, 2001. / **14** Scherr was first hired as a teacher of metals in 1978 and within a year she was asked to chair the department. David C. Levy records. The New School Archives and Special Collections. Accessed October 5, 2018. / **15** Scherr's unpublished memoir, 127, 128. / **16** The school catalog indicated that "the department of Clay/ Glass/ Metal/ Textile Design aims to educate designer/ craftsmen who are as comfortable in the world of the handmade object as they are in mass production." Rochelle Wyner, "Parsons bridges the gap between school and marketplace," *The Crafts Report* (February 1986). / **17** LOT 451. Scherr's silver bracelet with tassel and the letter "P" for Penland, and a note from the artist claiming "Penland is my second home!" Penland Annual Auction Catalog, 2009. / **18** Florence Hardymon, "A toast to Mary Ann." Penland Annual Auction Catalog, Summer 2008. / **19** AAA. Oral history interview with Mary Ann Scherr, 2001. / **20** Cynthia Wolfson. *Relative Visions: The Artistic Differences between a Mother and a Daughter. Jewelry by Mary Ann Scherr and Sydney Jo Scherr* (Akron Art Museum, 1995; Raleigh: Visual Arts Center, North Carolina State University, 1996), 6. / **21** "In Memoriam." *Designlife* magazine, (Fall 2016), 54. / **22** As part of my research for the exhibition, I've interviewed all three jewelers: Amy Veatch is a former student, Sarah Tector and Suijin Li are former studio assistants of Scherr. / **23** Sissy Marshall, interview by Ana Estrades. July 19, 2019. / **24** Eleanor S. Marshall is featured in the gallery of meaningful artists after Scherr's chapter "Marriage of Drawing and Metal" in Le Van, *The Penland Book of Jewelry*, 207. / **25** Scherr started making these personalized rings as early as 1969 for celebrities like the Duke of Windsor. Mary Strassmeyer, "Day of Rings and Royalty" *The Plain Dealer*, June 4, 1969. / **26** A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Suijin Li had just completed a degree in Industrial Design when she came to the USA and met Scherr in 1991. Interview by Ana Estrades, May 9, 2019. / **27** As part of my research for Scherr's exhibition at the Gregg Museum in Raleigh, I have had conversations with relatives, friends, collectors, artists and designers, former students and studio assistants. The words most often associated with Scherr are restless, a force of nature, incredible talent, energy and creativity, master teacher and wonder woman. / **28** "Raleigh jewelry and metal works maker Mary Ann Scherr turns 90." North Carolina's Statewide Public Media Network profile, 2011. https://youtu.be/_xPptcMy0y4. / **29** "I enjoy teaching because I enjoy the effort and what happens with people when they discover the possibilities," Scherr said. Katherine Waller, "Metals instructor has golden past." *Technician Online*. March 2015, *http://www.technicianonline.com/article_fae85e1a-c160-11e4-be8e-2fb95d76bbaf.html.* / **30** Mary Ann and Sydney Scherr, interview by Caroline Wyland. June 29, 2015.

Forging a Link: Metalsmiths Respond to the Mercer Collection

Mercer Museum, Doylestown, PA
9.28.19 – 1.5.20

By Marjorie Simon

"Machinery can't make art. Art needs the touch of a human hand, its failings as well as its skill."[1]

Reviewing a group exhibition always leaves much unsaid, and when the venue itself also defies description, readers are likely to feel unsatisfied. Such is the dilemma in discussing *Forging a Link*, an artists' collaboration with the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, PA. Built in 1913, the museum houses the multifarious, 40,000-object collection of pre-industrial artifacts of Henry Mercer (1865–1930), an artist, archaeologist, and the founder of Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, producers of architectural and industrial ceramic tiles. A series of five lectures, kicked off by master metalsmith Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, accompanied the exhibition.

Born in 1856, Mercer could have had no way of knowing how the concept of "work" would change from the hand-hewn world of his youth. But he would be gratified by the level of craftsmanship and respect for beauty and function found in the exhibited objects.

The museum's first-ever collaboration arose out of conversations between Cory Amsler, Vice President of Collections and Interpretations, and Cappy Counard, Professor of Metals and Jewelry at Edinboro University, Edinboro, PA, who curated the exhibition. To begin, the artists toured the museum together, familiarized themselves with the collection, and then selected the spot where their work would be installed. At the opening, the thrill of seeing the perfect marriage of old and new was palpable. Scattered throughout the six floors of Mercer's poured-concrete house, the work surprised and delighted viewers as they wound through narrow corridors and climbed uneven steps.

Stacey Lee Webber, *The Craftsmen Series: Bucket*, 2019. Copper pennies and brass. 12¾ x 12 x 12 in. Photo: Joseph Leroux

Stacey Lee Webber's full-scale reproduction of a wooden well bucket, in meticulously soldered Lincoln copper pennies, hangs from the rafters, and is paired at eye level with the original bucket. Webber has made the coin motif her own, and though we've seen it before, it succeeds in making "the viewer question the value of labor and the work ethic of blue-collar America."

Many works were interactive. For example, Ian Henderson noticed that traps for farm pests such as rodents were designed to release rather than kill their victims. His outsized yet delicate *Flying Machine for Rodent*, which looked as if it might have been designed by Jules Verne or Leonardo da Vinci, allowed visitors to turn a crank to extend the "wings." Nash Quinn responded to the collection's many firearms with a sense of "juvenile infatuation." *Trigger Studies*, his animated rings, reference the intricate mechanisms of nineteenth-century rifles, while replacing the bullets with feathers. An accompanying video shows the precision of their umbrella-like movements.

Personal narratives and reminiscences underpin many pieces. *Help Me Say Goodbye*, Sue Amendolara's magnificent, deconstructed sterling silver upholstery scissors, commemorates her father's interior design studio. Maria Eife, known for her 3D-printed jewelry, was nearing the birth of her first child at the time of the artists' museum visit. The dairy accoutrements, including the butter churn and hand-carved wooden butter molds, gave her the idea to use the conical form of a breast pump flange to 3D-print decorative flanges in lacy geometric and floral patterns. Although made of plastic, their bright, life-affirming presence connected the wooden churns and folk patterned molds with the twenty-first century.

Another bridge through time is found in *Washing Day*, Melanie Bilenker's iconic, painstaking self-portrait using the Victorian technique of drawing with strands of hair. Tucked away in an alcove

Nash Quinn, *Trigger Studies*, 2019. Gold-plated brass, steel, padauk, feathers. Approx. 7 x 8 x 8 in. (each). Photo: Nash Quinn

Mercer Museum Central Court, 2019. Photo: Kevin Crawford

outfitted as an old general store, she recreated the stereoscope viewer that would have been found there. Because she filled it with two figures drawn from slightly different angles, visitors are able to see a miraculous 3D line drawing of the artist folding laundry.

Other standouts include *Hewn*, Myra Mimlitsch-Gray's three-foot-long bronze "elegy to the skilled workers whose hands are on everything, everywhere, on site." It gleams in the museum's reconstructed woodshop like a golden plane, with its emerging curl conveniently serving as a handle. *No Longer Your Intoxicant Muse*, Michael Gayk's darkly satiric 3D-printed steel medallions, offers political commentary by referencing images of cigar-store Indians and other racist advertising tropes of Mercer's era. Possibly the most astonishing piece is Warren Holzman's monumental *…and that life was the light of men*, a ten-foot-long segmented sperm whale, illuminated from within with LED lights to remind us of the dependence on whale oil for lamps and the terrible cost of lighting the darkness.

Regarding the exhibition catalogue, this one seems more hampered than most by the inability of 2D photography and matte-finish paper to reliably convey the scale of the densely 3D museum interior, and to locate the work within its visual cacophony. Henderson's rodent machine especially suffers from its print rendition. That said, the paperbound catalogue valorizes the humility of the hand, not the flash of the machined. It's informative and readable; the artists' thoughtful, jargon-free statements show the evolution of their inspiration, process, and finished piece. Sarah Archer's introductory essay gives a cultural context for Mercer and his collection.

Marjorie Simon is a studio jeweler and writer based in Philadelphia.

1 Henry Mercer, 1928, quoted in *Forging a Link* catalogue, 2019, p. 7.

DOMESTIC MATTERS: The Uncommon Apron

Peters Valley School of Craft, Layton, New Jersey
8.31.19 – 11.3.19

By Rebecca McNamara

The apron, when considered in a domestic context, is a signifier of stereotypical expectations of women as homemakers, mothers, and wives. The forty-seven women artists presented in the invitational exhibition *DOMESTIC MATTERS: The Uncommon Apron* engage this object—what curator Gail M. Brown terms a "charged icon" as form, metaphor, and springboard for broader concerns of domesticity, femininity, family history, and personal experience.

The gallery, a single room on the second floor of a repurposed early nineteenth-century general store and post office, is overfilled, almost cramped, with art. The individual works would benefit from more breathing room, but collectively, they demonstrate the surprisingly diverse ways contemporary makers—practicing across media including metal, fiber, clay, found objects, glass, and wood—tackle the concept of the apron.

A catalog (for use in the gallery in lieu of wall labels and available for purchase) provides brief, often unrelated, statements from nearly all of the artists. My immediate reaction was to long for a deeper and more critical interrogation of the histories and politics of the apron, particularly its lasting association to women, which seems to be readily accepted here. But the choice to feature an array of artistic voices upholds the exhibition's proposition: the apron generates inherently personal stories and, by extension, inherently personal art, which couldn't possibly be positioned within a single curatorial thesis.

Artists like Cynthia Cosentino approached the topic with admiration. Her *Grandma's Apron*, a stoneware full-body apron constructed with motifs for cooking, cleaning, childcare, sewing, and other household tasks, is an homage to her grandmother who, she writes, "reveled and ruled in her role as home maker."[1] It is a recognition of domestic labor as strength, dedication, and loyalty to family. Explorations of motherhood also include Margaux Lange's *Mother*, one of few wearables on display.

Mary Hallam Pearse, *Leaded*, 2019. Lead, silk. 36 x 36 x 1 in. Courtesy of the artist

Renée Zettle-Sterling, *Object of Mourning: Purge*, 2019. Velvet, silver, copper, trim, clothing from deceased loved ones, Photograph. 55 x 39 x 21 in. Courtesy of the artist.

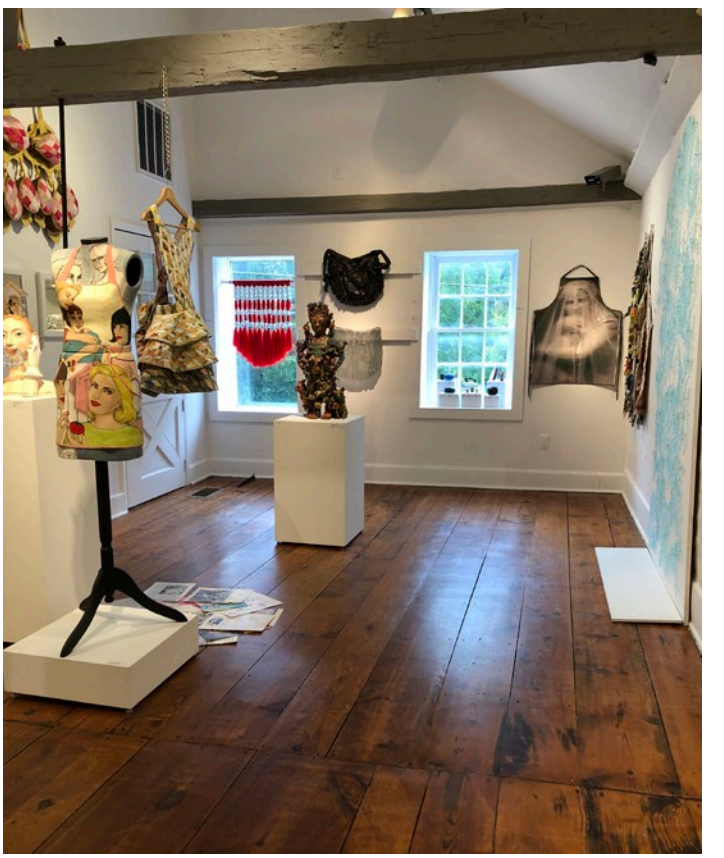
A hand-fabricated florid motif surrounds the face and arms of a woman and an infant (repurposed doll parts). The child's head is accented by a metal strip, imitating an actual scar on the artist's special-needs daughter. Lange sees the apron as a symbol of "motherhood, protection, care taking."

Other artists use the apron as a framework to more explicitly interrogate the complexities of women's presumed and unspoken roles. Kate Kretz's *Emotional Labor Apron* is a pink, floral-patterned cotton apron fully embroidered with words describing the many tasks performed in a single day: "Tell her to feed the dog. […] Clear the table […] Go into the studio and work for a few hours […] Argue with her about computer use. […] Braid her hair. Sing a song." Stitching is an art and a labor that is too often undervalued, just as the actions themselves go under- or unrecognized. Meanwhile, Karen Hampton's *she stands; wash, rinse*, a cotton dress marked with handprints and quickly sketched phrases, reflects the specific experiences of migrant domestic workers of color who face harassment in and out of the home.

An apron rendered in metal turns the seemingly frail garment into armor, a shield. Further, using blacksmithing techniques traditionally associated with men to craft the stereotypically female object blurs and questions old-fashioned gender roles. Among the artists playing with these tensions in literal depictions of aprons were Jen Blazina, Elizabeth Brim, Tracy Krumm, Mary Hallam Pearse, and Gwen Samuels. Metalsmiths, including Nicole Jacquard and Mallory Weston, also investigate these ideas with other forms. For instance, Weston presented her actual wedding dress, designed in collaboration with Bianca DePietro. It is a simple, above-the-knee, short-sleeve, collared white satin dress whose bodice front is covered with thin, hard-edged, geometrically shaped pieces of nickel that the artist pierced and stitched together with thread. An emblem of love and celebration is also one of protection.

One of the most puzzling works on view is Pearse's *Leaded*, a lead apron with a frilly-looking border, its waistband hand-stitched with red silk. Using a vintage sewing pattern to create the form, the artist replaced a pocket in the upper left with the shape of a handgun. She writes, "I'm interested in the tension that arises from using a material that can protect you and simultaneously kill you." The presence of a gun is shocking, especially here, embedded in an apron in an exhibition on domestic matters. Does the apron *hold* the gun? Hide it? Reveal it? Why? Is it a metaphor? If so, for what?

Renée Zettle-Sterling's moving *Object of Mourning: Purge* offers an unexpected use



Installation view, *DOMESTIC MATTERS: The Uncommon Apron*. Photo: Lakota Gulick

for the apron. The final work in her "Objects of Mourning" series, it contains all the clothing and fabric scraps from deceased loved ones that she hadn't yet used in her art. The clothing is attached to the backside of a black velvet apron; it does not guard the wearer from getting messy but instead protects the messiness of the deceased's clothes, nurturing them (and the pain, grief, anger they symbolize) between the apron and the survivor's body. In an accompanying panoramic photograph, the artist wears the heavy garment in a forest of tall, thin trees, their leaves scattered on the ground—the place where her brother was killed in a hunting accident.

These and other works complicate one another. The apron is not simply an object for critique or praise, nor a garment or symbol, nor a statement or question, but both/and. *DOMESTIC MATTERS* embraces myriad interpretations uninhibited by politically, socially, or even curatorially constructed barriers and does not classify or order artists' responses, making for a more difficult viewer experience, but also, perhaps, a more honest one.

Rebecca McNamara, a historian of nineteenth-century through contemporary American art and design, is Associate Curator at the Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College.

1 All artist quotes are from *DOMESTIC MATTERS: The Uncommon Apron*, exhibition catalog (Peters Valley School of Craft, 2019).

Installation view of *Spiritress Eternal: Power Vessel*. Photo: Aimee Howard-Clinger

Patron of the Arts: Paulette Myers

Edwardsville Arts Center, Edwardsville, IL 7.19.19 – 8.30.19

By Luanne and Roger Rimel

At the gallery entrance to the exhibition *Patron of the Arts: Paulette Myers*, visitors encounter one of Myers's large raised and patterned vessels; one's first impressions are of form, texture, and beauty. To the right, in a larger gallery area, the forty-eight works on display spans Myers's over forty-year career as a maker, educator, and mentor. A series of floating walls leads to an adjoining space, featuring a collection of jewelry and sculptural works by thirty-six former BFA and MFA students from Myers's tenure as a professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE).

Myers was recognized as the 2019 Patron of the Arts by the Edwardsville Art Center because of her impact on the metals and jewelry community in the St. Louis area, and her contributions to the development of the metals program at SIUE. When offered a retrospective exhibit, Myers requested the companion exhibition of work by her former students, who represent her legacy as an artist, professor, and mentor. Exhibition curator Aimee Howard-Clinger, Associate Professor of Metalsmithing at SIUE, says the their work is an excellent example of the breath and depth of contemporary metalsmithing. She says, "I believe there's a reciprocity that occurs when you teach that also helps inform and push one's own personal artistic pursuit."[1]

Many of Myers's students have gone on to become teachers and mentors themselves, and their inclusion results in an impressive presentation of the knowledge and skills passed on from Myers to a new generation of artists. Among the alumni included in the adjacent space is Marlene True (BFA 2003), Executive Director at Pocosin Arts School of Fine Craft in

Leia Zumbro, *Heart Drop Brooch*, 2012. Steel, brass, holly, ebony, paint. 6 x 3½ x 3½ in.

Paulette Myers
Undercurrent, 2015
Sterling silver, iron, black coral branch, 18k gold, 14k gold, fine silver
2 x 3 x ¾ in.
Photo: Don Casper

Paulette Myers
Crescendo: Reliquary, 2016
Argentium silver, 18k gold, mild steel, raw diamond, found object
3½ x 2¼ x ½ in.
Photo: Don Casper

Columbia, North Carolina. She states, "Paulette's influence and mentorship and confidence in my abilities were invaluable to me. The most valuable lesson was to find a way to create opportunities."[2] True's sculpture *Steel Poppy* uses repurposed steel, sterling silver, and enamel. Another former student Sherri Jaudes (MFA 2003) headed the Metalsmithing Department at Maryville University in St. Louis from 1994 to 2016. Her piece, *Patience*, is made of sterling silver, copper, and mild steel. Annie Pennington, MFA 2009, has been teaching, writing, and creating since working with Myers at SIUE. Her piece, *Moment of Refuge*, is made from sterling silver, color pencils, polymer clay, and paint. Myers's teachings are represented here by the many raised and formed works, reticulation patterns on surfaces, and the combined use of materials.

The pieces in Myers's retrospective exhibit span from 1972 to 2016. From large vessels called "reliquaries," to intimate sculpted wearable objects, the beauty and power of Myers's work resonates. Themes such as the passage of time, life journeys, and reverence for nature are evident in the titles and forms of many of her pieces.

Journey: Reticulated Box, Myers's earliest piece, was created while she was enrolled as an MFA student at Washington University in St. Louis. The piece hints to the conceptual ideas she continued to explore throughout her career. Myers's mentor and instructor was the renowned silversmith Heikki Seppa, who introduced her to new methods such as reticulation and anticlastic raising. Such techniques are masterfully employed in her vessel series. In one such example, *Spiritress Eternal: Power Vessel*, 1996, Myers raised and formed sterling silver onto a geode-like structure that has an inner silver wall with 24-karat gold Keum-boo confetti-like lines. A large watermelon tourmaline crystal slab projects from a fabricated silver form, suggesting an eternal flame. The piece is powerful, created as a reliquary, speaking of containment and the spirit world.

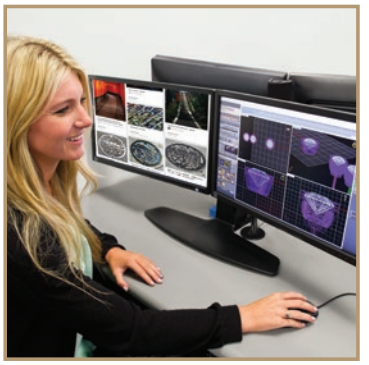
Myers conducted extensive research into the techniques of Keum-boo, and Korean Damascene. In her later works from 2012 to 2015, she incorporated coral, fossils, pearls, and found objects, in addition to gemstones, referencing her interest in timelessness and the natural world. The contrast in materials and surfaces creates monumentality in her smaller brooches and neckpieces. In the 2015 piece *Undercurrent*, Myers combined sterling silver, 18- and 14-karat gold, iron, raw diamond, and a black coral branch. Using the Damascene technique, Myers created a surface texture of blackened iron and bright gold to reference the flotation of plant life in the sea. The black coral branch and entrapped raw diamond float above the surface. The scale and visual impact of the gold pattern and combined materials draws you in for a closer look at the details.

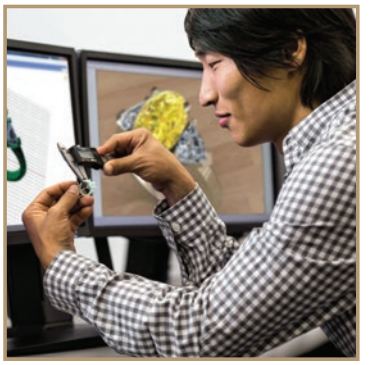
Myers's most recent piece on view, *Crescendo: Reliquary* (2016), is a neckpiece made of argentium and sterling silvers, 18-karat gold, steel, raw diamond, and a circular found object. According to Myers, the word *reliquary* refers to the moment of life, death, and then beyond. She uses the diagonal upward movement of the chiseled lines in steel, and the reticulation pattern on the silver, to reference the power and intensity of life. The circular object and diamond allude to the eternal continuum.

Myers constantly experimented with new ways to form and texture metal and researching age-old Korean processes, then passed all of this knowledge onto her students. Myers's and her former students' combined skills and talents created a beautiful exhibition of metalwork that spoke to life journeys, natural observations, and the mastery of techniques.

Roger Rimel, a metalsmith, and Luanne Rimel, a textile artist, live and work in St. Louis.

1 Quoted from email conversation with curator. / **2** Quoted from email conversation with artist.





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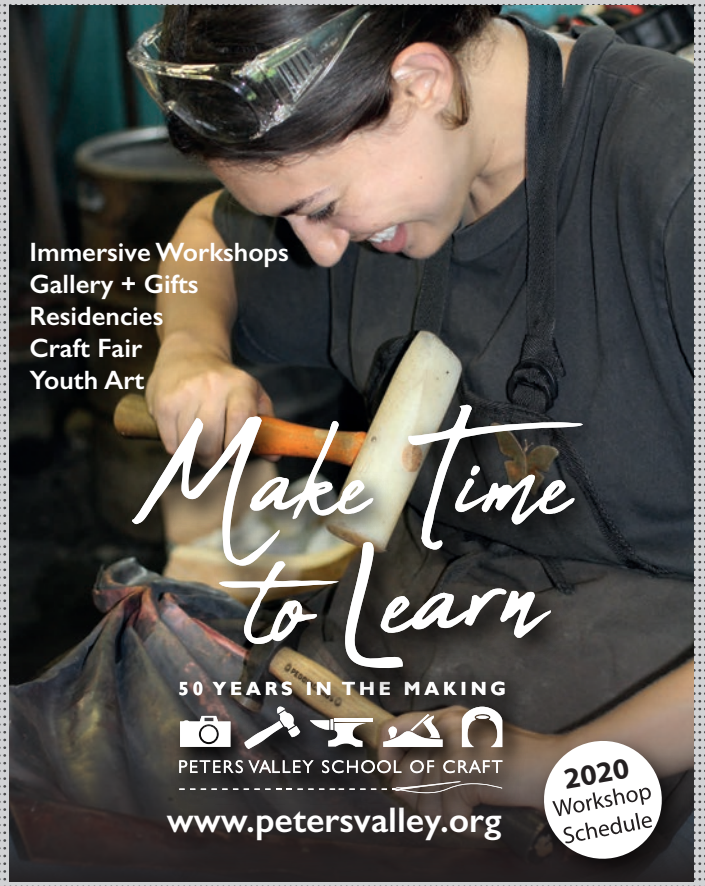

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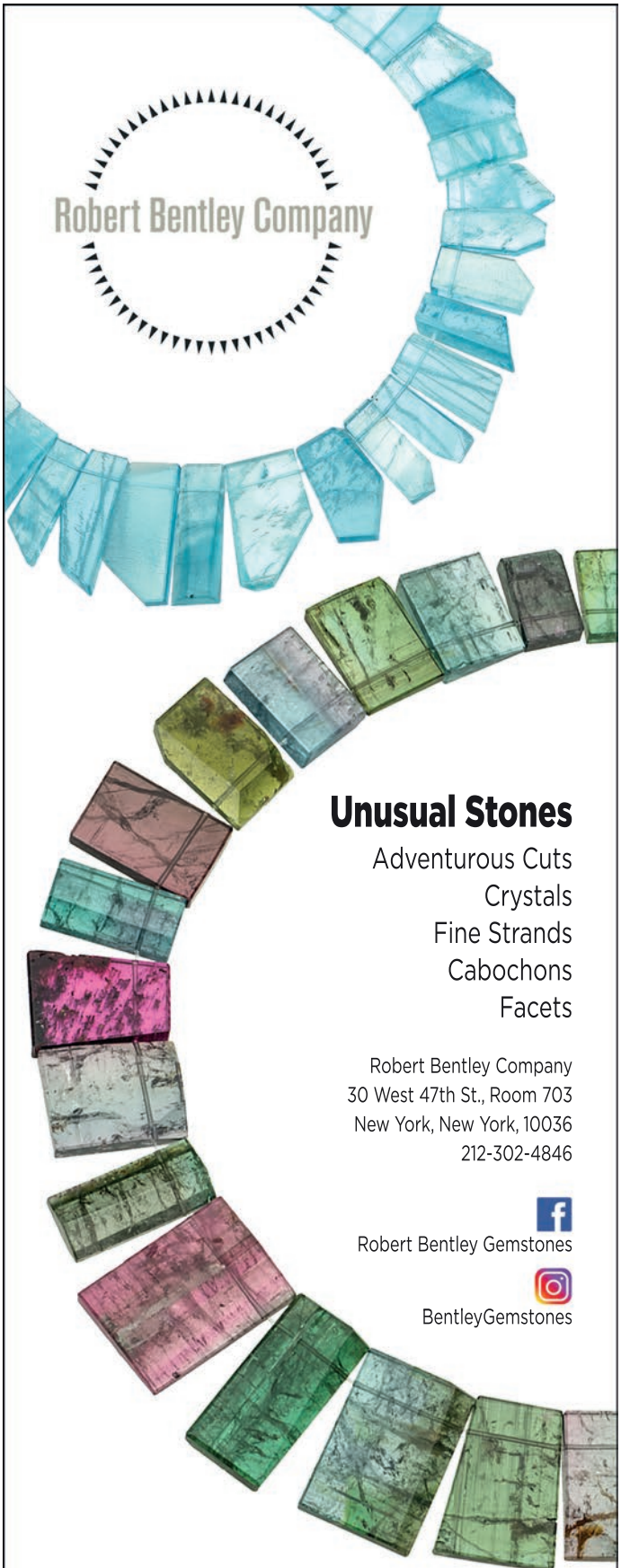

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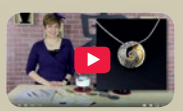

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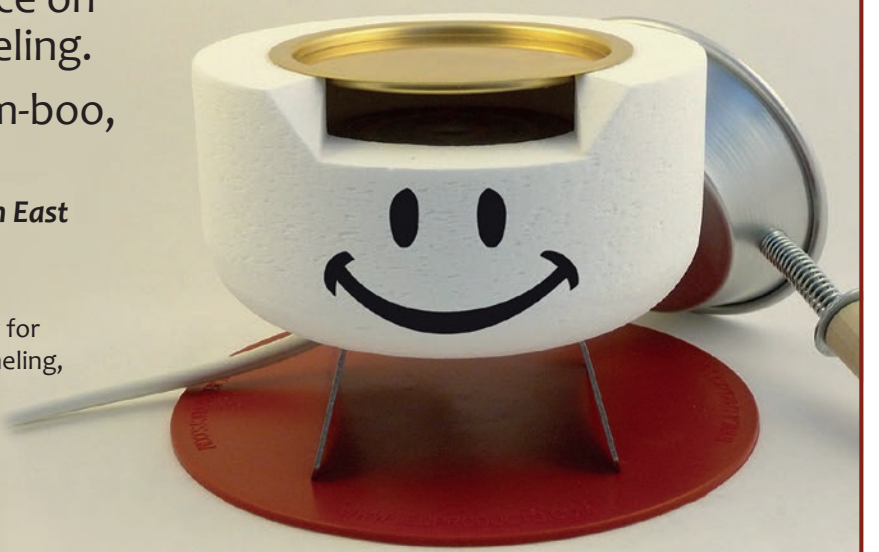

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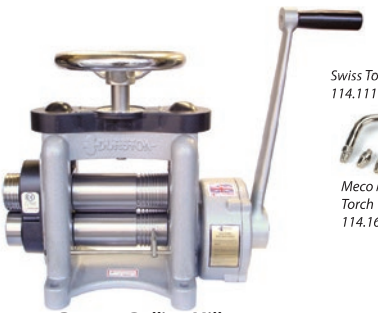

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